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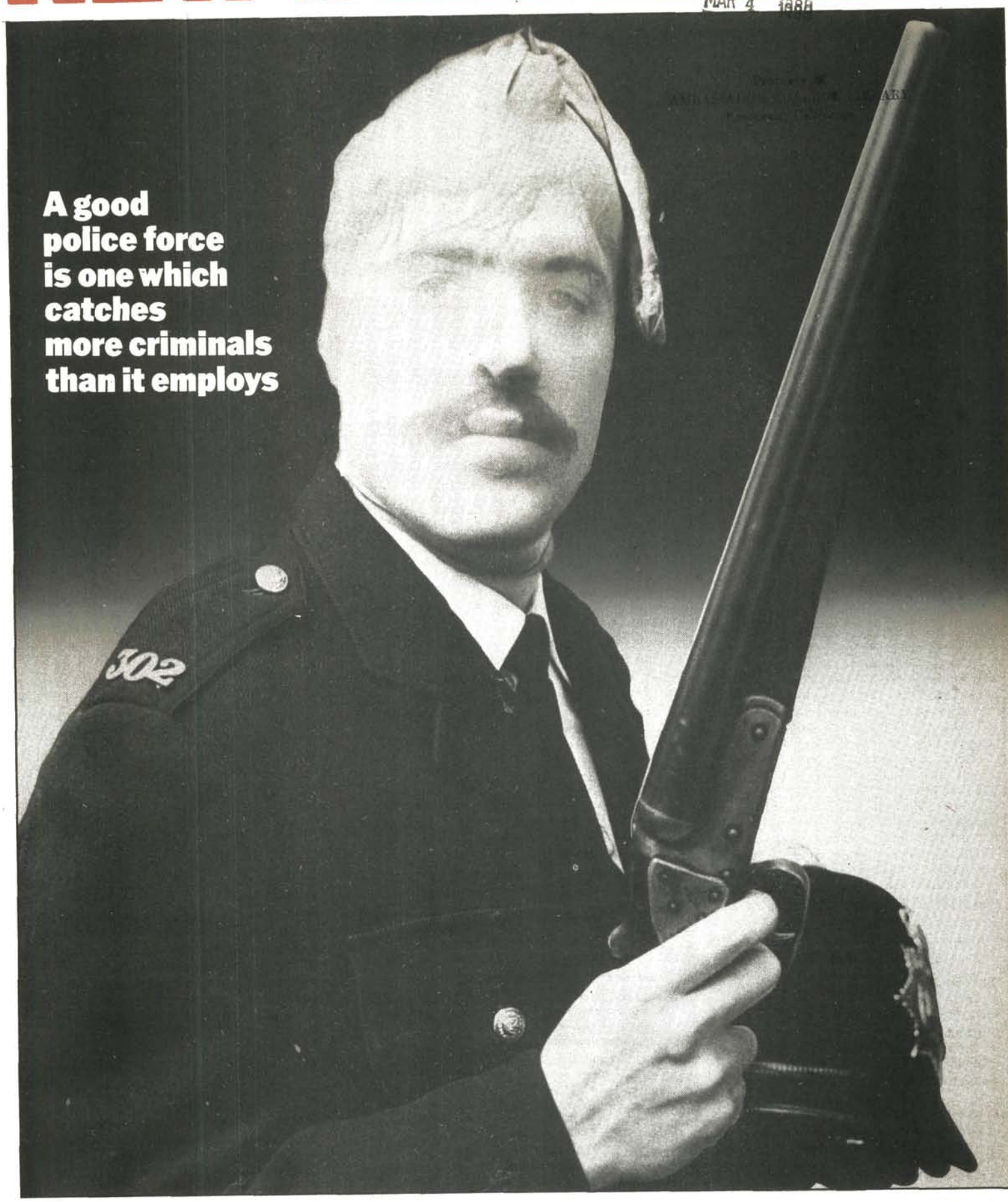

Rudolf Bahro on the 'Green' movement
How Militant undermines the Left

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NEW STATESMAN
Volume 99 18 January 1980 No 2548

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Time to reform contempt laws

TRIAL BY JURY was the real victor in the Divisional Court this week, when the Attorney-General lost his attempt to have the NEW STATESMAN found guilty of contempt of court for having published an interview with one of Jeremy Thorpe's jurors. It is now quite clear that sensible research into the workings of the jury system is acceptable, and this is good news when the system is under frequent, ill-informed attack from the spokesmen of the authoritarian right.

The situation is more difficult when – as in our instance – a specific case is identified. Everything then must depend upon the circumstances: in ours, when no money changed hands, and the juror expressed himself soberly, the Lord Chief Justice did not perceive a contempt of court. He scarcely gave carte blanche to anyone who wishes to interview a juror and publish the material in any form: the area will remain a tricky one for editors and journalists, but one cannot ask more from judges who have to decide cases precedent by precedent.

Anything further must be done by Parliament, and it is now time for a complete reform of the contempt laws, based on the report of the Phillimore Committee. The Law Officers might care to devote a little more effort to studying that document, and a little less to trying to turn journalists and publishers into criminals.

May the force be with you

SOME THINGS ARE TRUE even when the Left says they are true. One such difficult proposition is this: it is inconsistent to call for a tough posture on law and order while insisting that police criminals are a special case. On other pages we print evidence which gives rise to slightly more than 'cause for concern' about Britain's police. But almost equally alarming is the response such criticism invariably receives.

The Home Office and its ministers, aided by most of the press and almost all of the Tory Party, make it their business to defend the police, however plausible the accusations that are levelled against them. There may be the occasional 'bad apple' (the argument goes) but the police force as a whole is beyond reproach. Critics are smeared as anarchists, communists or indiscriminate bobby-bashers – with the result that many people of all ages cease to believe a word any police officer says. Thus the alleged defenders of 'law and order' create exactly the opinion on which they base their own resentment and clannishness.

The whole point about the 'bad apple' theory is not, as many police officers believe, that there is bound to be a rotten element in every barrel (which implies that it can be overlooked). It is that one rotten apple is enough, given time and a little nurturing warmth, to decay all the others. The three current diseases infecting the police force (racism, corruption and brutality) are certainly related. Once the police start to see one section of society as hostile or vulnerable or both, the way is open for a general mentality of cynicism and deceit. And the infection goes on spreading. Just as the Special Patrol Group attracts the less sensitive type of policemen, so gradually the police force will begin to attract an even less desirable class of volunteer than it does at present. Then the principle of 'set a thief to catch a thief' will take on rather too literal a meaning (heralded by certain recent robberies). With a man like Sir David McNee in command, who is too arrogant to admit the truth when it stares him in the face, the position becomes desperate.

We have been as tough on the police as the evidence will allow – and that is pretty damn tough. Would we be credited, therefore, if we said that there are many decent police officers who are disgusted by the growth of the SPG, the lawlessness of the Special Branch and the rank corruption and conspiracy within the CID? (Those who deny that any such disgusted and worried police exist will have to explain why we are not yet a police state.) They are certainly around, but we don't hear a word from them. Are there really no senior police officers who will protest against what is happening – perhaps as loudly and as publicly as McNee and Anderton assure us that we are lucky to have such guardians as themselves?

One of the great British pretences (along with the impartial civil service, the apolitical monarchy and the incorruptible police force) is that we 'tackle the ball and not the man'. But this is precisely what the police and their apologists are doing their best to avoid.

NOTES

Above contempt

Denys Blakeway writes: On Tuesday the Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Park refused an application against the NEW STATESMAN for contempt of court. The application had been made by the Attorney General, represented by Mr. Simon Brown and Mr. Andrew Collins, after the NEW STATESMAN reported an interview by Peter Chippindale and David Leigh with a member of the Thorpe trial jury ('Thorpe's trial: how the jury saw it', NS 27 July 1979).

In a brief judgement Lord Chef Justice Widgery outlined the arguments of counsel for the Attorney General and the NEW STATESMAN. Mr. Brown had argued that, although he was not questioning the propriety with which the article was published, a convention of jury-room secrecy had now been ignored too frequently. This was evidenced by the number of articles revealing the experiences of jurors in the affidavit of the editor of the NEW STATESMAN. Mr. Brown finally argued that a mischief had been committed if the judges believed that the article interfered with the administration of justice as a continuing process.

Mr. Robertson proposed for the NS that no obligation of secrecy lies in the juror's oath, that there is no precedent of real application and an overhwelming authority is in favour of allowing revelation of the jury's action after the conclusion of a trial. Furthermore, law already exists to prevent possibly harmful effects of such revelations: the libel law, and specific instances of the law of contempt.

A debate in the House of Lords in 1967 had made it clear that no law existed making it an offence for jurors to speak about their experiences. This debate was followed by a report of the Criminal Law Revision Committee endorsing the conclusion of the Lords.

In this particular case it was clear that the NEW

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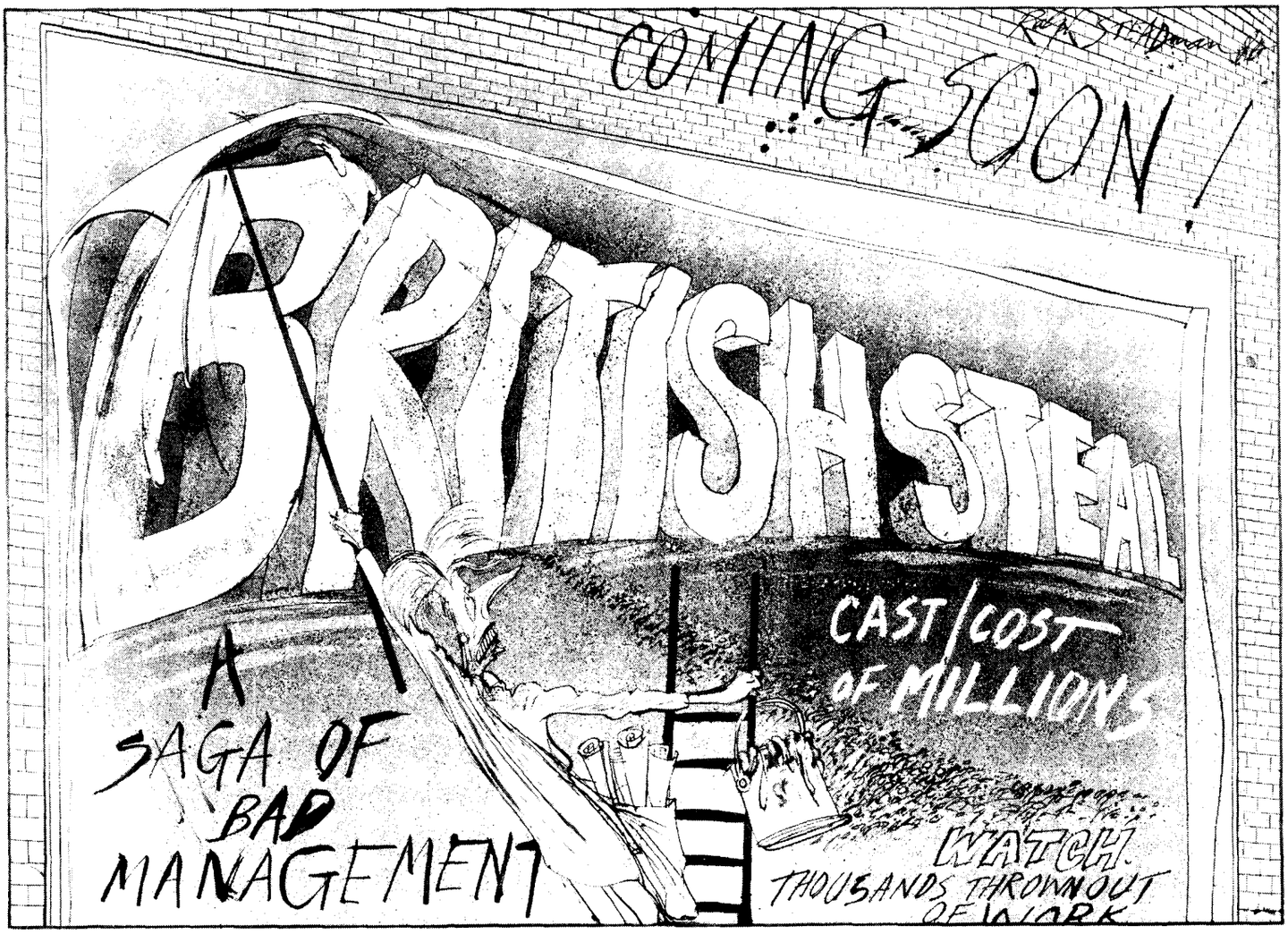

NOTES

STATESMAN had done nothing which scandalised the court nor sought to interfere with the due administration of justice. The juror in question had approached the journalists and had received no payment. No attempt was made to sensationalise the article.

The judges went on to rule that certain interviews with jurors could constitute *prima facie* grounds for contempt. In the case of the NEW STATESMAN, however, counsel for the Attorney General had merely argued that there had been disclosures of the deliberations of the jury after the Thorpe trial. No criticism had been made of the manner in which the NEW STATESMAN handled the interview nor of Peter Chippindale and David Leigh. It was stated that a contempt in future could occur if journalists or newspapers acted improperly. It was not indicated, however, what such impropriety might be.

The judges referred in particular to the tenth Criminal Law Revision Committee of 1968. Several eminent legal authorities had stated in it that there was no need for statutory control of disclosures from the jury room. It was to be hoped that the Press Council might intervene to prevent any abuses should they arise. The judges also mentioned several 'laudable' articles, cited in Bruce Page's affidavit, detailing various jurors' experiences. Such articles prepared members of the public for their possible future jury service.

An order for costs was made against the Attorney General.

More gas price rises?

Christopher Hird writes: The planned 29 per cent increase in domestic gas prices is a victory for two groups. First, the government, which has adopted a policy of interfering in the management of a nationalised industry if it can be milked for cash to help out the government's own financing. Second, for the Corporation's industrial customers – particularly the trade body, the Chemical Industries Association – who have been complaining vociferously for the last year that domestic gas was too cheap: industrial gas prices are to rise by only 10 per cent.

Early last decade, to ensure that North Sea Gas got off to a good start, BG offered some customers very cheap fuel indeed on long term contracts. As a result, and because industrial tariffs were anyway lower than domestic tariffs, the average price per therm for industrial gas was less than a third of the price of domestic gas. With new contracts being signed at higher prices and with BG's policy of linking gas prices to oil prices, by last year the average price of industrial gas had risen to 64 per cent of the domestic price. The existence of large contracts disguises the difference in the tariff prices: 16½p for domestic gas and 24p for industrial customers.

BG wants to close this gap by more than this year's round of price increases. (So there are more rises, over and above the rate of inflation, in domestic gas prices on the way.) Ironically, one of the reasons for the wide gap is the government's ban on a domestic price increase last April when it was trying to keep down the Retail Price Index as its Budget tax changes were pushing prices up.

This time round BG did not want gas prices as a whole to be increased to the levels just announced. The policy was forced on it by the government's insistence that next year BG should find £400 million in cash to *lend* to the Treasury. (In previous years BG's significant cash surpluses have been used to repay loans from the government. Now that all those have been repaid, it is lending the money.) Although next year's cash limit of £400 million is less than the current year's £450 million, the 1979/80 target is only being achieved by pushing some capital investment forward into next year, when it could amount to £500 million – all of which will be financed internally, i.e., from our gas bills.

A further reason for the government pushing for a big price increase is its desire to suppress demand and thus make things easier for the oil, coal and electricity industries. The expected 17 per cent electricity price increase seems just about justified on grounds of rising costs and therefore suggests a much more comfortable cash limit for that industry, although a hefty price increase may only be delayed until the autumn.

Eastern promise

Donald Kirk writes from Tokyo: The peregrinations of US Defence Secretary Harold Brown through China and Japan for the past ten days may mark a watershed in the unhallowed history of militarism in the region. Brown's aim has been to form a tripartite alliance against the Soviet Union, with the Chinese and Japanese troops manning the front lines beneath the umbrella of American air and nuclear power, not to mention US ground forces in South Korea and Japan. Although one of Brown's aides described his adventure in China as representing a 'fuller flowering of discussion', rather than an effort at 'creating an alliance', the wording of the statement strengthened the view that the US and China have reached a *de facto* accord. One first step will be exchanges of senior officers on prolonged visits, with the Americans doubtless assuming their role of 'advisers', while the Chinese study some of the more recondite arts of warfare. Another, unpublicised, aspect of the accord will be the exchange of intelligence information, with the US relaying word from their spy satellites of Soviet troop movements.

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Ideally, from the American point of view Japan should form the central core of the alliance and the purpose of Brown's stop-off in Tokyo earlier this week was to persuade the Japanese to spend more than 0.9 per cent of their trillion dollar gross national product on defence. Why not up the ante by a few tenths of a per cent, the anonymous 'senior official' kept telling reporters on the plane from Shanghai to Tokyo, suggesting the Japanese should spend well over £10 billion a year on defence despite their no-war constitution. True enough, the senior official acknowledged, Japan should not acquire such strength as to frighten southeast Asian nations who remember World War II, but surely, he intimated, the Japanese could widen the 600-mile limit placed on patrols around their own islands. Indeed, the Japanese have already agreed to participate for the first time in mid-Pacific exercises this spring with all the Pacific allies, including the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, of course, provided the background music for the secretary's martial airs but the Japanese were not persuaded. Under no circumstances, they said, would they go along with a quantum leap in defence spending. The 'senior official' lamely responded that he meant to say that Japan should increase its defence outlay 'by a few hundredths not a few tenths of one per cent'. Regardless, Brown told Japan's Prime Minister Masayoshi Chira he expected 'steady significant increases over some period of time' – a sign of Washington's determination to stitch together the new alliance notwithstanding trepidations in Tokyo about provoking a war that some Japanese, at any rate, would like to avoid.

Let them eat waste

Peter Martindale writes: Mrs Thatcher has continually used the idea of 'wasteful bureaucracy' to justify her attack on public services. Now that cuts for 1980-81 are being planned in some detail, it is possible to see how much real 'waste' has been identified and removed. Where better to look than the education service in Lincolnshire, the county where La Passionaria herself received her oft-lauded schooling?

After adjustment for falling school rolls some £4 million is to be cut from Lincolnshire education budget – that's 4.6 per cent. Raising the price of school meals to 50p will save 41 per cent of the total, while lower qualifying limits will reduce the number of free meals served by a third. Inflation and pay awards may push the price of a dinner higher, and there is little doubt that it will be poorer parents who will be least able to afford the meals. A further 2 per cent will be saved by other increased fees.

Cutting 'non-educational' provisions such as school heating and cleaning staff, reducing the quality of food in meals and reducing staff will save a further 35 per cent of the £4 million. Other sources will save 7.5 per cent, including 4.6 per cent from higher education, leaving 16.5 per cent cut directly from educational services. Virtually all welfare assistants are to be dismissed from primary schools in September, the peripatetic remedial service will be cut by 60 per cent, a unit for disruptive pupils will not be developed, permanent supply teachers are to be reduced, centrally allocated funds (for equipment etc.) will be cut by £30,000 and the development budget by £92,000, the latter including minor improvements to the county's abysmally low nursery provision, the appointment of trainee welfare and careers officers and additional lecturers at colleges of further education. All these proposals will increase the burden on classroom teachers, limit opportunities for children and hit hardest at the least advantaged pupils. Provision for music, needle-work and the youth service will also be cut.

'Administrative' savings amount to £50,000, but even these cuts are hardly bureaucratic. The educational welfare and psychology services are to be reduced although they are already below nationally

accepted standards. The general staff may be reduced by five unspecified officers.

The council has totally failed to identify either posts or procedures which are wasteful or which they see as unnecessary to the educational needs of the county. The reality is that 'cuts in bureaucratic waste' are cuts in substantive educational and social provision and increased charges to consumers. Still, the chairman of the county's education committee, councillor Heneage, is clearly in line for a Thatcher knighthood: last week he justified savings in the school meals service as cuts in bureaucracy on the grounds that nutritional levels were determined at present by central government and were therefore bureaucratic.

Death for sale

Dick Barbor-Might writes: The open letter to Margaret Thatcher that was issued by Amnesty International earlier this week raises the possibility that we might yet see introduced in this country a proper licensing system for the export of 'repressive technology' – equipment that is used to increase the operational efficiency of secret police and military and para-military organisations that conduct state terror. Revelations of the extent to which Idi Amin's dreaded 'State Research Centre' had been equipped by Pye Telecommunications and other British firms have given impetus to the Amnesty campaign to prohibit such exports.

Those who wish to challenge this trade find themselves witnessing a dazzling display of buck-passing. On the one hand, officials in the Department of Trade and in other ministries deny that they have sufficient information to be able to exercise any control. Yet spokesmen for companies such as Pye transfer their responsibility to the government, adopting the view that everything is permissible that is not expressly forbidden. This way, conveniently, no one has to assume the moral responsibility for a lucrative trade that provides the means for massacre and torture in other countries.

Under the last government, Labour members such as Greville Janner and Max Madden, as well as Liberal leader David Steel, suspected that Amin was somehow being materially assisted from Britain in the exercise of his repression. It was known, for instance, that trucks and Landrovers were being supplied to the Ugandan army through the Crown Agents; it was also suspected that the much criticised Stansted air link was being used for more sinister exports than the provision of whisky. Yet, in the face of resistance from Whitehall, it was difficult for Labour ministers to do much about a trade, whether with Uganda or with other countries, that was being enthusiastically promoted by such diverse parts of the government machine as the Department of Trade, the Defence Sales Organisation and the Crown Agents. Thus David Owen at the Foreign Office ran into serious difficulties with the Department of Trade when he wanted to stop the Stansted flights completely. Unimpressed by arguments that the credibility of Britain's international 'human rights' policy demanded their cessation, the Trade officials counter argued that the 'in violability of contracts' was at stake.

However, even seasoned Whitehall cynics find that there are problems in publicly defending a trade policy that entails the pursuit of lucre whatever the tragic human cost. Criticism thus has to be deflected with generous measures of misdirection and disinformation. In recent months Amnesty International has encountered the argument from Douglas Hurd MP, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, that a reason for not controlling the trade in Amin's day was that the British government's quarrel was 'with the government and not the people of Uganda', as though prohibiting the sale of sophisticated communications equipment to Amin's death squads would have harmed rather than benefited a population that was living under a reign of terror. Not that the Tories have any monopoly of disingenuous explanations: Jim Callaghan once surmised that radio-equipped Landrovers going to Amin were intended to 'detect television licence dodgers'.

A test case?

Francis Wheen writes; A year ago the national conscience was shocked by the *Guardian*'s disclosure that an Indian fiancée entering Britain had been given a virginity test by immigration officials at Heathrow Airport. Since then there has been virtual silence, but the issue may return to the headlines soon when an attempt is made to extract compensation from the Home Office.

Soon after the test the woman was married to her fiance – an Indian who has lived in Britain for 20 years – but she was, apparently, still distressed by the treatment she had received, and eventually returned to India. The husband, who remains in Britain, has been trying to persuade the Home Office to pay compensation; the man's MP, Syd Bidwell, met Home Office minister Tim Raison last week and was told that the matter was still 'under consideration'.

If the Home Office doesn't come up with some money soon, the man intends to sue the Home Office, on behalf of his wife, for sexual assault. A difficulty with this course of action – although it would make an extremely interesting case – is that the wife does not wish to return to Britain and the case could hardly be pursued without her. Syd Bidwell believes that the best bet is to put down a motion in the House calling on the Home Office to pay some compensation to both husband and wife. If enough signatures could be found for the motion, the ensuing publicity might force the Home Office to act. After all, as Bidwell points out, Tim Raison or Willie Whitelaw could announce such a payment without losing face, since the event occurred under a Labour government.

Mr Brian John Canham

A report appeared in our issue of 19 October entitled 'Behind Southall's Justice' to the effect that Mr Brian John Canham, the London stipendiary magistrate, was paid his salary by the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police, which raised some doubt about the partiality of stipendiary magistrates.

We have ascertained that this statement is untrue (and without foundation) and we regret that it was made.

We are glad to take the opportunity of correcting our error and of expressing to Mr Canham our regret for any distress or embarrassment caused to him by the original report.

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LABOUR PARTY
Patrick Wintour

Not so much a Tendency, more a way of life

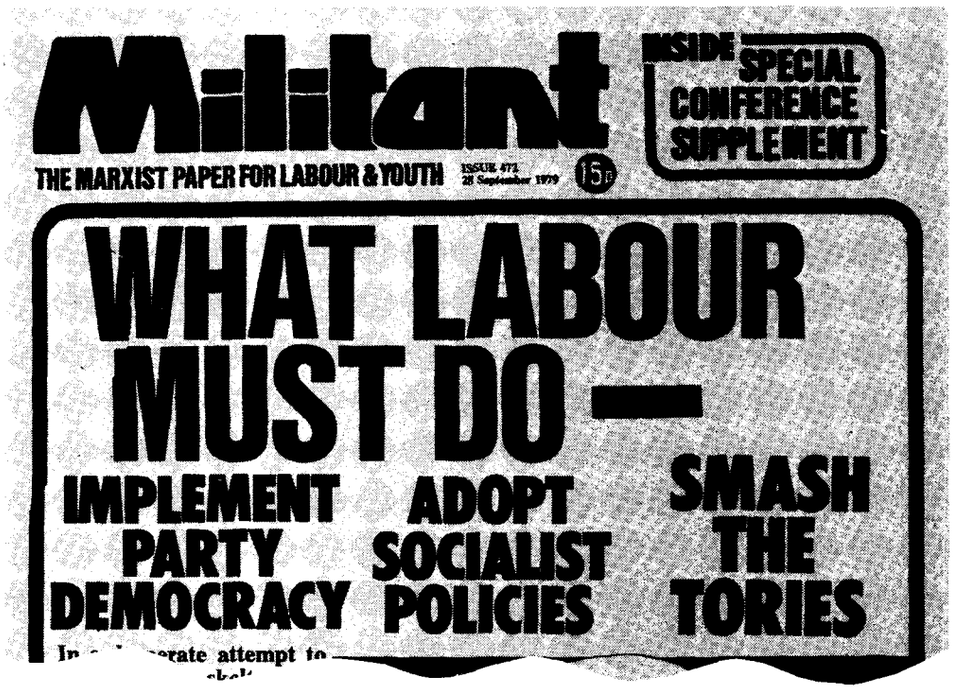
Militant's resolutionary socialism

ONE SUMMER'S NIGHT in the Forest of Dean, the flashlights of the Labour Party Young Socialists' national committee were trained on a small group of people sitting outside a tent drinking beer. It was the week of the Young Socialists' summer camp – which last year happened to coincide with the Young Socialists' national conference. Andy Bevan, the Labour Party's youth officer, had already announced by megaphone that it was time for bed; now he told the group that it was after 11 o'clock, that lights were supposed to be out and that others were trying to sleep before the important debates of next morning's conference. Fair enough, they said, and took themselves and their beer off to another side of the wood, out of earshot, about half a mile away. Minutes later the dogged flashlights of Andy Bevan and the national committee shone upon them again. They were told, to their astonishment, to return to their tents and sleep.

The puritanism and authoritarianism of the Labour Party Young Socialists are a product of a particularly dour brand of Trotskyism which characterises the Militant tendency, dominant in the LPYS for the past decade and suddenly discovered by the national press halfway up Whitehall in tanks. The problem with Militant is not simply that it is Trotskyist (for that need not necessarily mean that it is undemocratic), nor even that it is a secret organisation within the Labour Party – which it undoubtedly is. The problem is more that Militant's parasitical politics and intolerant, dulling methods have been driving others out. And it is within the Young Socialists, where Militant concentrates its efforts, that these characteristics can be seen most clearly.

Militant captured the LPYS in 1970, only a year after Labour's National Executive had restored to the party's young members the right to elect their own leaders. For the previous half-decade the NEC had been appointing the youth leaders, ever since Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League had been expelled and the Young Guard (forerunners of IS and the Socialist Workers' Party) had made a political decision to leave. Today, all eleven members of LPYS's regionally elected national committee are Militant supporters. The last Tribunite outpost, the West Midlands, fell in 1974 and by 1979, Militant's supremacy was such that four of the 11 were elected unopposed. Only two groups are left to contest with Militant: Workers' Action (Trotskyist) and Clause IV, (Tribunite). Labour's right wing doesn't even bother to enter the race.

At last summer's LPYS conference, Militant received 200 votes while Workers' Action and Clause 4 got roughly 20 each. The atmosphere is usually not unlike a Billy Graham revivalist meeting, with delegates trooping to the rostrum to explain their personal experience of conversion to Militant's brand of socialism. One former member of Militant described an hysterical 15-minute standing ovation delivered to Militant leader Ted Grant, after he wound up the conference at Llandudno with a mundane and stock-Militant speech. The rest of the proceedings were devoted to recitations of Militant's political programme, discussions of what Trotsky really stood for, and seminars on such perennials as the coming Indian revolution.



'They cannot relate politics to school, to starting work or to cultural oppression', says a leading Clause 4 supporter. 'Everything has to come back to Trotsky's "transitional demands". If you suggest that young people might be concernced with issues that range beyond economic exploitation, they say you are "diluting politics".' Former Militant supporter Hugh Richards, who left along with 20 others after a series of disagreements in 1976, says: 'They treat all young people as if they were white Anglo-Saxon male workers, except for the fact that they are shorter, thinner and less hairy.' It seems to have escaped their notice that large numbers of young men and women, black and white, were radicalised not just by references to 19th century philosophers but by the Anti-Nazi League.

Certainly, the politics of the LPYS are extraordinarily out of touch with today's youth. Their attitude to sex is pretty Victorian and homosexuality is considered of no consequence to the working class. Last year in *Left* (Labour's turgid and Militant-dominated young people's paper, which loses £4,000 a year and which the LPYS wants to rechristen *Young Worker*), Phil Frampton argued against the legalisation of cannabis, condemning it as 'another workers' poison' designed to 'dull the consciousness' and weaken the proletariat's 'perception of reality'. Ed Bober, a former vice-chairman of the LPYS and currently a full-time worker for Militant, has publicly described the women's movement as 'petty bourgeois women with a hang-up'. At a recent LPYS social in Newcastle, intended to display local culture, three female members of the organisation leapt on to the stage and pranced around in pig-tails, mini-skirts and stockings. They object to an autonomous women's movement.

Rock music is reviled as another form of economic oppression and Tom Robinson is denounced in *Left* as a greedy hypocrite. Nor do Rastafarians escape Militant's sour gaze: according to an internal bulletin of June 1978, they are guilty of 'indulging in a dream of a Promised Land flowing with milk and honey back in their historic African homeland, a reactionary utopia almost uncannily akin to Zionism among the oppressed Jews'. But even the PLO cannot take heart: Militant is opposed to a Palestinian homeland too.

Alongside its sterile attitude to youth, Militant harbours a sectarian passion which takes some beating on the left. Its internal bulletins are full of denunciation of other 'sects'. It especially loathes the Socialist Workers' Party – for 'ignoring the mass labour organisation and trying to find a short easy path to build a mass revolutionary party'. *Socialist Worker,* the SWP's newspaper, comes in for particular criticism in the October 1978 bulletin: 'A paper without theory will not hold a proletarian readership for long. It will become a bore and not be of interest to the activists in the class.'

Militant members attend meetings of some single-issue campaigns and of some groups such as the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, but they contribute very little to them. The National Abortion Campaign was ignored until official TUC support allowed abortion to be deemed a class issue.

Under Militant instruction, the LPYS refused to join the Young Liberals and Young Communists in the Campaign against Youth Unemployment, and instead set up its own (doomed) Youth Campaign against Unemployment. According to its internal bulletin of October 1978, Militant refused to join the Anti-Nazi League because it was 'not linked to an overall socialist programme' and was therefore bound to fail. In spite of the ANL's widely-recognised success, Militant in their October '78 bulletin viewed it as a 'miserable failure' which was only worthy of a 'positive approach' by the LPYS because 'a number of uncommitted youth attend some of the ANL events'. Similarly, Militant on Merseyside which controls Liverpool's District Labour Party, refused to join the Merseyside Anti-

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Racist Alliance. Militant's own bizarre response to black militancy was to set up, with LPYS sponsorship, a UK youth section of the People's National Party of Jamaica. This was heralded as the most significant event yet in the fight against racism – but at the same time it displayed a crushing insensitivity in trying to force into the PNP not only Jamaicans but all West Indians and even Militant's Asian followers. Not surprisingly, the section collapsed. In 1977, Militant tried to gain control of the Indian Youth Association, but its bulletin of June 1978 lamented that 'unfortunately, opportunities were not grasped sufficiently quickly . . . if we had responded decisively we could have won control of that organisation and recruited hundreds of Indian Youth'. Its sectarianism is such that though it favours troops out of N. Ireland it won't join the United Troops out Movement. In short, Militant does not like campaigns when they are not run by Militant.

PREDICTABLY, THE LPYS has a tiny membership. In a paper prepared for this month's NEC, Andy Bevan asks for an increase in funds from £15,900 to £50,000 – on the ground that LPYS branches grew at a rate of one per week in the 16 months before October 1979, when they totalled 407. The problem is that nobody knows how many people are in these branches. Unlike the separate Labour Students organisation (NOLS) there is no precise card count. The NEC has stipulated a minimum of 5 per LPYS branch but nobody can strictly enforce the rule. Most estimates put the total membership at around 4,000, which means that only a fifth of those eligible to be in the LPYS think it worth their while to join. Yet in *Perspectives and Tasks*, 1977, Militant declared: 'It is entirely possible to build an even bigger mass movement – 50,000 active members within 12 months.' It is possible but has not happened. In Europe, by contrast, Socialist youth is not in such a ghetto. The Swedish young socialist party has 65,000 members. The Norwegians 25,000, The Finns 20,000. They also have far better relations with the main party.

The parasitism and intensity of Militant is exemplified in the student movement and in the National Organisation of Labour Students. When Militant lost control of NOLS in 1976, it was a cruel blow and the group has since worked hard to regain its position. Indeed, it sends its school student recruits lists of preferred universities and it is probably not a coincidence that it regained control of Sussex University Labour Club this year after 15 of its members enrolled there. However, Militant's attitude to student politics is ambiguous: it has tried to ban the Anti-Militant Labour Student page from *Left* and it warns members of the risk of being infected by 'studentism'. Says the June 1978 bulletin, student cadres should 'base their political work off campus' and see that their social lives are not based in college. *Perspectives,* 1978, advises student comrades to remember that the success of an occupation 'is measured by the number of papers sold and the number of potential contacts made'. Militant is wary of losing members to full-time work as student leaders – which may help to explain why it has been losing ground within NOLS. The most recent NOLS conference was the first for many years in which the debate was not defined in terms of two rigid blocks, pro- and anti-Militant. Rivalry in NOLS has been so intense that evidence of massive forged recruitment was found at Militant-held Cardiff and Newcastle universities.

If Militant feels threatened by NOLS, it is because it represents one of the few arenas where members can come across political ideas which differ from its own interpretations of the great leaders Lenin, Trotsky, Marx, Engels (not to mention occasional writings of 'Trotsky and [Ted] Grant'). More recent Marxist thinkers nor even the Young Marx are discussed. Militant deliberately tries to shelter its members from other groups' ideas and often holds meetings before and after confrontations with outsiders. Its politics have scarcely changed since the Fifties. It insists, for example, that the traditionally defined proletarists *must* go through the social democratic experience in order to understand the bankruptcy of the Labour bureaucracy. The bulletin of October 1978 explains:

> Workers learn on the whole by experience and it is the experience of another Labour Government with the highest possible majority that will expose to a higher degree the ideas and methods of the right wing. The experience of reforms being abandoned despite having a majority would raise the level of the working class the greatest.

Hugh Richards says of Militant: 'There are certain slogans which are crucial to them and one is 'the hammer blow of events'. They have a very deterministic view of capitalism, believing rightly that declining profit proves it will not last, but they completely fail to recognise the active role they themselves could play in bringing about revolutionary change.'

Militant's role is to prepare the party cadres for the leading role they will be called upon to play when the inevitable split occurs in the Labour Party. It does not believe that a reactionary Tory government will be a catalyst to revolution and in this sense its members are not conscious wreckers of Labour. Indeed, they are likely to work harder than anyone for Labour's return to power – albeit for their own motives. Only occasionally does their enthusiasm and loyalty to their own cause prompt them directly to damage the interests of the Left. During the 1979 elections, for example, Militant supporters in Southampton Test often left Bryan Gould, the Labour candidate who was defending a marginal seat, to support a Militant candidate in the Isle of Wight where Labour had come third behind the Liberals in 1974. It was also Militant who have been the cause in the delay in introducing mandatory reselection of MPs. Their refusal to withdraw their more extreme motion in 1977 and leave the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy to stand alone led to the proposal definitely being remitted to the NEC. Similarly, their unco-operative behaviour again this year made life difficult for the CLPD.

Is Militant well enough organised to exert a significant influence over the Labour Party? It has branch, district, regional and central editorial boards and immense commitment from its members. With 60 full time organisers it is almost as well staffed as Transport House. But it also has a very high turnover of support. Members are often asked to attend six meetings a week and this burns many of them out. Moreover, Militant's centres of support are very localised and mainly confined to university catchment areas or places where the Labour Party itself has long ago withered on the vine. The claim, based on votes for Militant NEC candidates, that it controls 60 constituencies is wildly implausible. This assumes both that being a constituency conference delegate is a coveted job and that delegates closely follow mandates from their constituencies.

Even if its organisation were better, Militant would not really have the money to mount a serious threat. It is very secretive about its money and does not even distribute internal accounts to its members. But an internal letter of November 1978 signed 'C' and addressed to all organisers says: 'The average receipt per comrade per week based on the three months to September including the International Levy was £1.17, a drop from £1.22 the average of the previous year'. On the basis of the membership of 1,300 this means an annual income of £78,000.

In addition, Militant receives money from fund-raising drives. Last month, the *Sunday Times* ran a story headed 'Who gave £148,500 to Trots?'. Its reporters had discovered that Cambridge Heath Press, Militant's printers, had received three interest-free loans, which were not repayable until April 1986.

There is undoubtedly something approaching an 'Entryist International'. Militant has sister papers *Nuevo Claridad* in Spain (where its links are particularly strong), *Voorwarts* in the Netherlands, *Vonk* in Belgium and the unfortunately titled *Offensiv* in Sweden. However, it is extremely unlikely that foreign, state-aided entryist parties are the source of the loan. Instead, Charles James, a Labour Party member, has discovered another Militant company called Workers International Review Publications, set up in 1973. The 25 shareholders of WIR are all leading lights of Militant and almost all have been on the Militant editorial board. WIR received a series of donations from 1974 to 1978, rising from £18,000 to £77,000 in the last year. Much of this money, amounting to some £236,000, was transferred to Cambridge Heath and probably constituted the levy on members' salaries. The loans given by WIR exactly match the loans received by Cambridge Heath.

So what should Labour do if it were conclusively proved, as it seems to have been in the past week, that there is a party within a party, breaking Clause II which bans 'distinctive and separate organisations'? It would be invidious to start bans on Trotskyists just when the party was beginning to develop wider forms of democracy, such as workers' control. It would look odd at a time when Labour was ostensibly trying to rebuild a mass membership. Besides, would not the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, with its annual general meeting, officers and well-organised resolutions, constitute an organisation within the organisation? And could not the same be said for the Campaign for Labour Victory?

The right is not concerned with such niceties, however. The Militant scandal is a handy weapon for discrediting the Left in general and the NEC in particular – over its supposedly pusillanimous attitude to the Underhill Report. To his credit, Lord Underhill says he does not favour expulsions: he merely wishes to see the NEC carry out its 1977 promise to inform constituencies about the role of Militant. Some NEC members are now agreeing that open government has the advantage of showing that you have nothing to hide. Militant is a pest not worth hiding. The best way to defeat it is to expose it as a deformed offshoot of a decent political idea.

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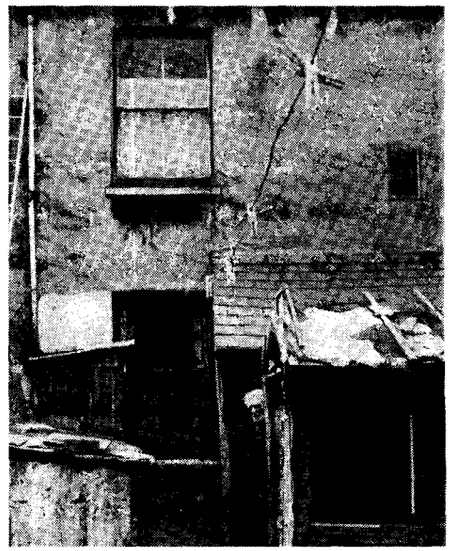
A Discourse on Crying

THE TORIES' HOUSING bill gives a legislative boost to the idea that Britain's housing problems can best be cured by the private sector (see last week's NS), despite the evidence that it is building and public health regulations, and building technology, which make it unprofitable to build rented housing for the average wage earner. Only public sector housing – costly to the taxpayer in its early years but no drain on resources later – is going to house the majority of the homeless and rehouse the slum dwellers. Those who doubt the size of such a need may be convinced by the moving account given below by BOB DUMBLETON of his experience in Cardiff over the last ten years, where he was a member of a pressure and casework organisation.

The dearth of ideas about housing which Dumbleton identifies stretches well into the Labour Party: a convenience, as simple arithmetic shows that neither the public nor private sector has the resources to cure Britain's housing problem quickly. Building a socialist housing policy will need to confront many unpalatable facts and powerful lobbies: the size and power of the financial institutions, including the lending policies of the building societies; the inaccessible and inefficient nature of many public housing authorities and the strong bias of the British tax system towards owner-occupation.[2]



LINDA'S TWINS were stillborn after she, her husband and two children, had slept nights in a car. Mr Radford, a sick man, died after the Council evicted his family. Megan, a widow, was harassed for months about her impending eviction. Her children, aged 18 and 14, found her dead one morning, her features grotesquely distorted by a cerebral attack. She had been trying to ring me the evening before.

Frank Francis died on the streets after the Community Physician (comforting title) decided he was not 'vulnerable' under the Homeless Persons Act. John Ivor died in a squalid doss house. There was no 'halfway' shelter for him between the hospital and the Sally Army hostel. He had been banned from the latter for incontinence. 'It would be so nice to sleep in clean sheets' he said. 'Aren't they clean?' I asked. 'There aren't any' was about our last conversation. In a sentimental moment we asked about putting a marker on his grave. It was not allowed because there were five other bodies in the Council grave.

Dawn, with her child, jumped in the River Taff in despair of finding a place. She didn't die, but they took the child from her for three months to teach her a lesson.

You couldn't help laughing at what the Council called their rehabilitation houses – the choicest slums given over to the 'problem' families as selected by Social Services. These houses were left until last when areas were emptied, bricked up, demolished. Supposedly temporary, they were a 7-year sentence. David spent a formative childhood in such a one in the heart of Mr Callaghan's constituency. He has a speech defect and a huge chest concavity.

There was the young woman who cut her wrists the same week Labour's housing cuts were announced; the old soldier, epileptic and sleeping in a garage; the parents giving room to married daughter and family and in the overcrowded stress all four getting psychiatric treatment. The Council official warned them that if they put the young couple out they could be charged with an offence under the Homeless Persons Act.

One couple evicted by the Council in 1950 for rent arrears wandered the slummy rooms of Cardiff raising six children. They were never able to get a house back because of the outstanding debt. It doesn't take many experiences to learn that eviction is the severest punishment on men, women and children that is not in the penal code. It is a most common 'life-event' on the way down and out. Its purpose is to intimidate the tenantry and is used equally by Tory, Labour and Plaid Cymru local authorities.

You could write it as a Discourse on Crying. The crying of children taken into care, their mothers at the end of the road. One said that homelessness reinforced impossibly the innate sense of being temporary. Some housing officials feel a bit better if the woman in front of them cries. 'I broke down then, I couldn't help it and he was quite kind to me then. I think he realised . . .' Most women say they hold back crying till afterwards 'so as not to give him the satisfaction'.

Green Farm Hostel for homeless women and young children is a regular cause of crying from humiliation. When we started, it was being 'phased out'. It is now regularly full, although husbands and older children are no longer separated – an old isolation hospital has been converted for intact families.

There's the crying of battered wives, having to go back to husbands' homes. The flat dwellers: 'all I seem to be doing is shout at him and smacking him. I've come close to really hurting him. If he had a garden to play in . . .' 'I'm not a weak-willed person but I've been so depressed in these flats that I've often felt like taking my own life. Only the fact that I have a child to consider prevents such foolishness. God help the old people and the lonely people in these flats'. The allocation policy to these particular flats created a largely single parent family ghetto. Practically all the women kept a hammer, knife, axe or poker nearby when they went to bed at night.

It is not just flats. Mrs S. wouldn't cry. When the Council refused to repair her house she refused rent and was evicted. Her family was split and she spent over a year in a tiny bed and breakfast room. She was served up by a local hack to the *Daily Mirror* and smeared all over the nation as a scrounger. Her children copped it from the others at school. 'They'll handle it' she said, with the grim dignity developed raising six children on her own, without ever drawing social security.

Other children can't handle it. Mrs Burt's are going frantic now. Her private life and problems were fully aired when they were evicted. The Council's files on tenants would put the Special Branch jury vetters to shame. The children from Rhoose Camp, the desolate homeless hostel used by the Valley Councils (it closed last year), were always known as the 'campies' at the local school.

There were the years of the squatters when the great motorway scheme fell through and left hundreds of houses empty. Mary got her four children out of care and still has them. Some were just glimpsed on their way from nowhere to nowhere. The baby girl whose face was a weeping mass of eczema; the family terrified that I was an official, the father in prison, three young boys with severe crew cuts, and fear a permanent layer between the skin and the bone.

Ten years ago the Labour Minister of Housing declared the end of the housing problem to be imminent. Ten years ago the great property boom was beginning. The most publicised victim in Cardiff of the boom and bust was the £100 m. town centre scheme by Land Securities out of Buchanan. On any day in 1973 there were planning and economic experts to tell you that this was a magnificent long-term investment of public and private money: 'the most exciting development of the decade'. On any day in 1974 they would tell you it was an impossible financial millstone. Less publicised was the collapse of council house building and the steady increase in homelessness. One council estate got built during the boom (only one builder could be found to tender). It is now emerging as another architectural and social disaster. 'When I go to bed I know that everyone all around is getting into bed at the same angle . . . it's the only place you can put the bed in the bedrooms . . . and if you have a window open you can hear everything . . .' It is not falling down yet like the flats and maisonettes built ten and twenty years ago. And it isn't yet in the lengthening queue for essential repairs and maintenance of the older council properties.

For ten years the Electricity Board repeatedly rejected complaints from one block of flats that their under-floor heating

1. See especially *Cruel Habitations: A history of working class housing 1780-1918,* Enid Gauldie, 1974.

2. Some of this argument was developed by Bernard Kilroy, NS 28 September 1979.

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did not work, and that it could not be afforded. They implied the tenants were too stupid to run it properly. After collective and militant action, the Board conceded this year that the system was badly installed, wrongly ventilated, inefficient. . .

A series of central communities have been cleared in less than two decades and transplanted in the sprawling estates – 'the vast wildernesses of the wholesale'. I suggest as a subject for academic research the number of elderly people who fell ill and died as a result. Mr Morgan died a month after demolition and removal to a first floor flat. He had a heart condition. Mrs Murphy couldn't stop crying.

Each year the City Housing Managers' report draws attention to the growing obsolescence of the inner area housing stock. Each year it becomes increasingly evident that the General Improvement Programmes, the Housing Action Area Programmes, are failing. The pundits, Frances Cairncross, Samuel Brittan, Harold Evans, have argued regularly that we have 'overinvested' in housing.

Housing once headed Labour's list of domestic priorities; for both parties it now heads the softest area for public spending cuts. The Green Paper signalled Labour's surrender of any distinct vision of council housing as socialist housing. Labour councillors in Swansea and the valleys are prominent denigrators of the homeless, the rent arrears cases, the Homeless Persons Act. Merthyr has just opened an especially spartan hostel as a deliberate deterrent. 'Families will have to live and sleep in one room, use bunk beds and share kitchen, toilet and washing facilities', promised the Director of Housing, Merthyr Tydfil, last December. In Cardiff, the insults, added to homeless injury, usually stem from a Tory landlord councillor.

The money for the revised town centre plan of shops and offices is from the Miners' Pension Fund. Miners' housing, a short distance away, is among the worst in Britain. To fill one gap in the town centre precinct the Council rushed through a scheme for a £7½ m. concert hall which apparently has been desperately needed by culture-starved people. The Council's strenuous discipline enacted on tenants and the homeless is curiously lacking when it comes to the property people. Port Talbot was owed ground rent for years by its town centre developer. Debenhams were encouraged in Cardiff with a 999-year lease and a peppercorn rent on the key central site – where, of course, we cannot afford to build houses. In Swansea, the Labour Council colluded with developers to sign the contract hours before the midnight deadline ushered in the Community Land Act and a prohibition on freehold sales. The Tenants Action Groups, forming in South Wales and elsewhere, have a constant refrain 'They don't care . . .'

The Left has a hole in its thinking where housing should be, despite the community action of the last decade. Rarely does a trade union bother. (The one exception is NUPE which sponsored a pamphlet – *Up Against a Brick Wall: the dead end in housing policy.*)

The revered leader of my own party (the Socialist Workers Party), Tony Cliff, when approached on the subject beamed: 'Ah, you mean squatting'. Ralph Miliband[1] and Perry Anderson[2], discussing (via Althusser and Gramsci) the institutions and processes which form ideology, mention between them just about everything – parliamentary democracy, market relations, commodity fetishism, the work process, family, religion, education, the media, cultural products of all sorts, sport even . . . but no sign of a house between them. Perhaps they haven't experienced that pressure. But the concepts of ownership, the insistent schooling in blatant inequality, the remote control of complex markets, interests, professionals and bureaucrats in housing and all its ramifications, are obviously highly significant for consciousness. The Tories know it well. Perhaps the neglect by the Left is because it is an issue most directly felt by women. But then the women's movement is (with exceptions like Women's Aid) surprisingly absent too. The movement may have difficulties overcoming its middle-class origins, or dealing with the theory of women at home – but there are connections begging to be made with the Lindas, Carols, Mrs Burts, Mrs S's of the subjugated housing class.

What have we done in Cardiff? When people do get a house they are beside themselves with relief, as if they will never have another trouble on earth. We have subsisted on such experiences. And we have built a local reputation as 'militants and extremists' with demos and the odd arrest. It all looks shamingly moderate now.

Something was taking shape in the last decade and it was not the end of the housing problem. It was the map of inequality newly etched in a dire impotence and contempt, rubbing out imagination and people.

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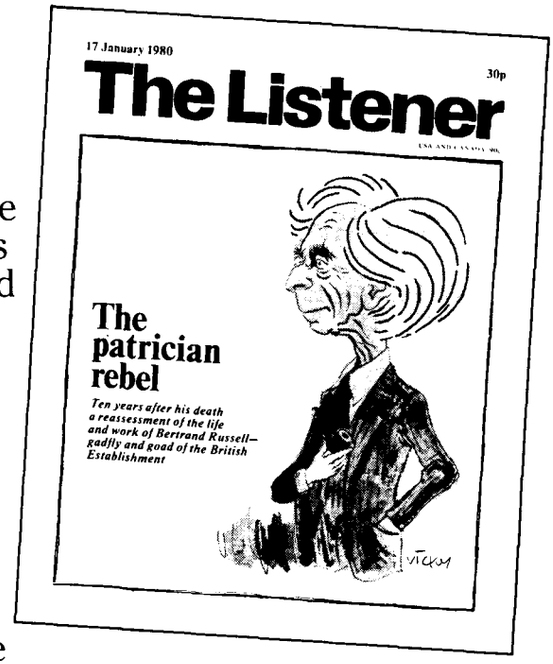
1. R. Miliband, *Marxism and Politics* – Oxford Paperback p. 54, and footnote. 'The listing (Althusser's) seems a little superfluous, since it is difficult to think of anything that has been left out.' says R.M.

2. P. Anderson, *The Antimonies of A. Gramsci.* NLR 100.

'I have imagined myself in turn a liberal, a socialist or a pacifist. But I have never been any of these things. Always the sceptical intellect has whispered doubts to me.'


17 January 1980
The Listener
30p
The patrician rebel
Ten years after his death a reassessment of the life and work of Bertrand Russell– gadfly and goad of the British Establishment
VICKY

A prophet is said to be without honour in his own country. Bertrand Russell certainly met that test. Twice imprisoned, he was still the most illustrious private citizen of his age.

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Read it today in *The Listener.*

The Listener

Edited by Anthony Howard

17 January issue 30p

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The story of Operation Countryman

For over a year in an obscure disused block of flats in Surrey a team of detectives have been investigating a series of allegations about the connections between senior London policemen and organised crime. Parts of the story of 'Operation Countryman' have leaked out as 'supergrasses' lived it up in police custody and the resentment of London policemen grew. Here PETER CHIPPINDALE gives a comprehensive account of the investigation's origins and scope.

Michael Bennett

THE CURRENT ROW about the inability of the authorities to deal with blatant examples of police misconduct is focusing on three deaths – Jimmy Kelly on Merseyside, Liddle Towers in the North East, and Blair Peach at Southall. But there is a fourth death, that of Tony Castro at the *Daily Mirror*, at the centre of an inquiry which this year is going to provide the biggest test of whether the police are effectively above or below the law.

The deaths of Kelly, Towers, and Peach are each shocking and grotesque. But they have to be put into perspective. In each case they were the result of sudden, unplanned events, and accusations have been against small groups of policemen acting on the spur of the moment. The death of Tony Castro is different. He was cold-bloodedly murdered as a result of a carefully organised and ruthlessly executed crime – and the accusation is that an equally organised group of policemen were involved in the circumstances surrounding his killing.

Castro, whose widow has now returned to their native Spain, was one of two security guards making the regular cash delivery for the weekly pay packets to the *Mirror*. On this occasion, 31 May 1978, their van was carrying £197,000 in notes. They were cleverly ambushed. Castro and his mate followed the normal procedure of driving into the loading area underneath the building and waiting until the huge security door had been closed and padlocked before they opened the van. They then started unloading the money, confident that they were secure from attack. But inside the building with them were two of the robbery gang, who had been hanging about posing as printers. The robbers smashed the padlock, rolled back the door, and ushered in a third member of the gang driving a stolen Mercedes. The three started to grab the money, which by then had been transferred to a box on wheels. Castro tried to fight one of them off, and was promptly shot just below the heart at point-blank range with an ugly weapon – a service revolver adapted to fire modified shotgun cartridges. The robbers ignored him, grabbed the rest of the money and vanished in the Mercedes. Castro died minutes later on the way to hospital.

The brutal murder caused a predictable furore, with demands for hanging and tougher sentences for armed criminals. The newspapers recalled that only weeks before the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir David McNee, had met members of the Magistrates Association and expressed his concern both about the growing use of firearms in robberies and the number of armed raids carried out by criminals who were on bail for similar charges. At the end of February a Hatton Garden diamond dealer, Leon Grunhut, had been shot dead outside his home in Golders Green and robbed of stones valued at £250,000. One of the men still wanted for his death was on bail. It is believed that this man, Alan Roberts, is in turn now dead. He was on bail for a charge relating to one of the robberies at the centre of the 'Operation Countryman' investigation.

According to allegations which are now being investigated by the 'Operation Countryman', the largest corruption team ever assembled, Castro's death, and the death of Grunhut, are linked to an organised web of corruption within both the City and Metropolitan police forces. The accusations are the most serious ever made against any British police force. The question is whether they, like the Kelly, Towers and Peach cases, are going to founder in the same morass of inaction.

Allegations of systematic, organised corruption within the Met are not new. The first was made by the *Times* disclosures of 1969, which began to expose the scandalous state of affairs in the CID. This was followed by the widely publicised resignation of Frank Williamson, the provincial policeman who was confined to advising the subsequent internal inquiry, rather than having operational control. His suspicions about how deep the rot went were amply justified when the man who had headed the inquiry, Det. Chief Super Bill Moody, himself got 12 years for corruption in the subsequent Porn Squad trials. Moody, and a swathe of other detectives from high to low, were not jailed until 1977, when the public could be presumed to be correct in believing that Sir Robert Mark's celebrated drive had rooted out most of the cancer in the system.

But any hope that he had got rid of it all has turned out to be short-lived. And while the corruption in the past was centred on two fairly predictable areas – drugs and porn – this time the allegations concern the police handling of one of the planks of the law and order brigade they are increasingly part of – violent, organised, armed robbery.

THE INQUIRY STARTED in August 1978, ironically as a result of the new method the Met had adopted of dealing with armed robbers – the supergrass. These men, who are now forming the bulk of the prosecutions in robbery cases, are habitual criminals who are offered light sentences (the standard is five years) and a new identity. Until recently – and perhaps still – these criminals were serving their sentences in obscure London police stations in cells specially kitted out with huge colour televisions, carpets and plentiful supplies of alcohol. They were allowed unsupervised evening visits from their wives and inspection tours of scenes of past crimes often turned into pub crawls and visits to restaurants.

In return they give evidence against their former accomplices in violent crime. It is fraught with peril legally, but it works and as far as the police (and seemingly the judiciary) are concerned the end justifies the means. Long in advance of the annual criminal statistics the newspapers have already started to print trumpeting stories about the success of

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Right, Leonard Burt, assistant chief constable of Dorset, head of Operation Countryman. His team deliberately emphasise their Dorset drawls and unmetropolitan appearance to suggest the bumbling incompetence of which Met officers accuse them. Far right, the scene at the *Daily Mirror*, after the robbery which killed Castro.

the re-formed Central Robbery Squad, mostly as a result of this method. But the supergrasses have now cut both ways. For it is their information which has led to the corruption inquiry, and the growing acceptance of the truth of their evidence in court which could be the crucial factor in it.

In the summer of 1978 a number of supergrasses were being de-briefed about their crimes by the Regional Crime Squad. They repeated, individually, stories not just about villains being involved in robberies, but policemen. They each stressed that they themselves had no individual involvement in the robberies, but were repeating what was common, and informed, gossip. The allegations were taken seriously, partly because if you believe a supergrass about fellow-criminals you can hardly disbelieve him about policemen, and partly because the men had been in different places, and had had no chance to collude with each other.

The RCS passed the stories on to the special internal force set up by Robert Mark to deal with complaints – the former A 10, now re-named the Complaints Investigation Bureau – CIB 2. The Bureau took one look at them, saw that they only involved officers in the City of London police, and passed them on to the City's Commissioner, Peter Marshall. Marshall, who had only been in the job seven months, took them in turn to another ex-Met officer, the Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Colin Woods.

Woods, who has now gone to Australia, decided an outside investigation was called for because of the seriousness of the claims. As usual the job went to a senior man in a provincial force – this time Leonard Burt, the Assistant Chief Constable of Dorset. But before Burt had even taken up his job it was realised that the allegations did not just concern the tiny City force, with its squad of only 150 detectives, but its huge neighbour the Met. After some consultation it was decided that the only way to deal with the situation was to allow Burt to expand his inquiry into both forces. As Merlyn Rees, who was then Home Secretary, said recently on London Weekend's *London Programme*, the investigation might well have been left to CIB 2 to handle if the allegations had come in a different order.

If that had happened, the result might have been very different. Although Mark's internal force can point to some individual successes (most notably, recently, the Khashoggi case, when three officers were jailed), the plain fact is that large numbers of criminals in London do not trust it, and either will not take claims there in the first place, or cooperate with its inquiries once they have been started by another complainant.

They, and in many cases their solicitors, point to numerous incidents where – like the Kelly, Towers and Peach cases – complaints which seem to be relatively copper-bottomed have ended up with short pro-forma letters from the Director of Public Prosecutions saying that the evidence is not strong enough for prosecution. They allege leaks from the Bureau; inquiries ineffectually carried through; an attitude that they, rather than the policemen being investigated, are the villains of the piece; and a general lack of commitment.

Not all of this of course is true, but in effect its truth makes little difference. The fact that it is believed by the one group of people who would be at the centre of corruption mitigates decisively against the Bureau's success, however good the motives of those running it.

LEN BURT AND HIS team of provincial policemen, which has now grown to 80, have, however, gradually built up a position of trust through which more and more criminals, traditionally wary of any policeman, are prepared to talk and – more importantly – make and sign statements which can be used as evidence in court.

His inquiries, as a result, have spread far beyond his original brief, to start by looking at three specific robberies – the *Mirror*; a £225,000 robbery at Williams and Glyn's Bank headquarters in the City in September 1977, during which shots were fired and a security guard hit in the leg; and a £175,000 payroll snatch at the *Daily Express* in May 1976. All took place in the City area, but were jointly investigated by Met specialist squads.

According to the allegations he has received, detectives from both the City force and the Met have been involved in setting up robberies by telling criminals of the movements of millions of pounds; facilitating robberies by making sure there were no police around when they took place; steering inquiries away from the real culprits to innocent men (naturally with criminal records and therefore likely candidates); helping criminals to get bail (the very thing McNee complained so vociferously about to the Magistrates Association); deliberately offering feeble evidence in some cases; framing criminals in others by planting evidence such as shotguns and 'verballing' (inventing supposed confessions). Because the allegations centre round robberies, they are naturally mostly against detectives who were in the Robbery Squad or Flying Squad, Scotland Yard's supposed elite group.

Between them, the detectives are claimed to have received pay-offs varying from £50 on minor matters to one massive share-out of £80,000 after one robbery. Together, the total runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds. These sorts of allegations, along with an alarmingly cynical view of the truth (as epitomised in G. F. Newman's books, later made into the *Law and Order* television series), have been made consistently in private for the past ten years. But because of the attitude of criminals to Burt's inquiry they are now coming to the surface in a way which means they can be properly tested to see whether or not they have any validity.

Naturally there are some criminals who – as in any investigation of this sort – are climbing on a bandwagon to try and smear officers against whom they have a particular grudge, and others who are trying to pull a red herring across the case against them. But there is no doubt that many of the allegations are well-founded, as the length and scope of the inquiry is proving. If there was nothing to lend any credence to anything that was being said, Burt would have been back in Dorset months ago.

But meanwhile his inquiry, sensibly based in a disused block of police flats in Godalming, Surrey away from the London police forces and therefore secure, is increasingly being seen as the one opportunity to sort matters out. Either the allegations are true, in which case the guilty will be properly investigated, charged, and successfully prosecuted, or they are not, in which case the police will be vindicated. Either way the result, if it is clear-cut enough, will end the wretched mess at the Old Bailey at present, where honest, properly brought cases against guilty men are being thrown out by juries, quite rightfully more and more liable to question police evidence because of the dubious, and in some cases, downright dishonest evidence in others.

SO FAR THE GENERAL consensus of opinion is that Burt is doing an extremely thorough and competent job. Not all, but more and more criminals, are putting their faith in him and his team. Two public successes have helped the wavering to make up their minds. In March last year two criminals, Patrick Carpenter and John Twomey, had the robbery charge against them dismissed at the Old Bailey after Burt had intervened. The case was a classic. Twomey and Carpenter were accused of an £18,000 bank robbery.

The evidence against them was two sawn-off shotguns supposedly found at Twomey's house, forensic evidence connecting them to the robbery, and a 'confession'. The two men said they had been framed and, what is more, that two policemen were still at it, approaching other criminals and telling them that if they did not pay £1,500 to each of them they too would be fitted up in a similar way. The two men's solicitor, James Saunders, was unexpectedly able to tape-record a meeting at which the threats were made. CIB 2, under its rule that allegations cannot be investigated until *after* a trial, refused to look at the case until the two men had been found either guilty or not guilty. The tape was taken to Countryman and authenticated, and the case against the men dismissed. They had spent 18 months in Brixton awaiting trial.

The second success was the recovery of £5 million worth of LSD, buried in a wood in Bedfordshire by one of the men convicted in 1977 after Operation Julie, which broke the biggest drug manufacturing ring ever uncovered in this country. The man, who refused to talk to Met detectives on the grounds he did

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not trust them, volunteered the information to Countryman in the hope of reducing his long jail sentence.

The majority of Met policemen have confined their natural dislike of such an investigation to fervent pleas that it will be over as quickly as possible to lift the inevitable cloud over every member of the force. But there has been other action which has shown that Burt and his men are hitting some targets. In the early days of the investigation, when it was briefly based in totally insecure premises at Camberwell, there were tip-offs to policemen named in the allegations, giving them time to prepare stories and get rid of evidence. Since then there has been a strong whispering campaign against Burt – mostly personal and suggesting things like his recent marriage being in danger, and his own team's stupidity. His men have been derisively nicknamed the 'Swedey' – a pun on 'Sweeney', the rhyming slang for Sweeney Todd/Flying Squad. 'Swede' is a long-established arrogant Met word for people they see as bumbling country coppers, totally at sea in the world of serious villainy.

The country policemen have turned this neatly on its head by playing up the country angle, emphasising their Dorset drawls, and taking great pride in the obvious disparity of their appearance and attitude to their city counterparts. Quite apart from any corruption, many of them have been genuinely shocked at the world of plea-bargaining deals, supergrasses, and contempt for the normal behaviour which has grown up in the Met, where it is not at all unusual for a serious villain to be held for anything up to a week, without access to a solicitor, before being freed or charged.

But it is beyond Burt, and in the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, that the problems have been emerging which bear a remarkable similarity to the Kelly, Towers and Peach cases. The present DPP, Sir Thomas Hetherington, is having a rough ride. Apart from these cases he has gone through the fiasco of the Thorpe prosecution and the Rhodesian oil sanctions-busting.

The central argument does not rest with him as an individual (although in the Thorpe case he must shoulder much of the blame), but with the nature of the road towards prosecution. At present the investigating officer sends him a report, and Sir Thomas has to decide, on the evidence put in front of him, whether a prosecution should be brought. To make this decision he applies his by now famous 51 per cent rule – there has to be a stronger chance of a successful prosecution than an acquittal. No matter how strong the evidence in suggesting the truth of the matter, this is a strictly legal decision. And in cases like the three deaths, or police corruption, getting enough evidence to cross the barrier at that stage is remarkably difficult. In all cases it is the word of a trained expert in evidence, interrogation and court procedure against that of people who have none of these advantages. In cases of violent death the civilian witnesses are often inevitably confused and at variance with each other; in corruption the very nature of the crime is clandestine, and finding corroboration is usually a matter of heaping up circumstantial evidence which proves beyond much doubt the likelihood of the prosecution case. One method of working towards the truth is establishing a 'system' (if similar allegations are consistently at different times by different people they are more likely to be true); the other is by establishing the truth of events leading up to the final allegation (if a criminal says he met a policeman at X spot on X day, and the meeting can be proved to have taken place, his allegation that he then paid over money is more likely, although not proved in itself).

AS THINGS STAND, if Sir Thomas decides, on legal grounds, that a case will be more likely to end in an acquittal, he returns the papers to the Chief Constable involved. Nobody therefore ever knows how far the evidence went. It is kept private, and the police do not even reveal whether it was strong enough for disciplinary action, which was Sir Robert Mark's rougher, but more effective way, of getting rid of suspect policemen. Hence the quite rightful public protest and widespread disillusionment with the present system.

As a result of Countryman's inquiries seven detectives have so far been suspended – two in the City and five in the Met. The Metropolitan Police Press Bureau, working on the basis that no case has been proved, does not announce these suspensions, and refuses to give the names of the suspended officers. It will merely confirm them if a journalist first gives them correctly. This attitude contrasts rather oddly

Many of them have been shocked at the world of plea-bargaining deals, supergrasses and contempt for normal behaviour

with the stress on the seriousness of suspension, and the fact that there has to be some fairly damning evidence before it is carried out. In Countryman's case Burt has been appointed by Marshall and McNee to do a specific job. They decide what falls within his terms of reference 'to investigate allegations of corruption involving armed robbery teams and police officers', and should be handled by CIB 2 rather than his team. They also decide, on the evidence he puts in front of them, whether an officer should be suspended.

And there have been no charges yet. Burt, as a result, especially in cases where detectives have been suspended for over a year, has been finding that the people he needs for successful prosecutions – the criminals – while they trust him, are by no means certain that the same level of commitment exists at a higher level. Their worry is quite simple. If they make the allegations and there is no action as a result, they will be left out on a limb to be picked off after Countryman has disbanded. James Saunders, who as well as Twomey and Carpenter has a number of other criminals essential to Countryman inquiries on his books, is pointing to the number of criminals who have given evidence to Countryman and then found themselves being re-arrested for other offences, sometimes by the same Squad that forms the subject of the complaint in the first place.

Burt has had a number of meetings with the DPP, and on two occasions with the Attorney-General, Sir Michael Havers, to try to get some action, and the DPP has so far responded with two moves. He has sent one of his staff to Godalming to liaise with the police team – a move only carried out twice before, in the cases of the Great Train Robbery and the Thorpe inquiry – in an attempt to steer them towards evidence which can be actually used in court. In addition he has agreed to what are described as 'certain limited undertakings' against prosecution to people prepared to sign statements and go into court. These are essential: by admitting to giving a bribe – a crime in itself – a criminal is also probably admitting to the original crime, for which he has never been tried. In other words, by his confession he is potentially putting himself in line for a sentence he would not otherwise receive.

What value this is having is questionable. The undertaking may well prevent prosecution if the case against the policeman goes ahead, but under the procedure that has been agreed a criminal can still be prosecuted if *other* evidence, apart from his admission, is found. It is quite clear some criminals regard this as making themselves a sitting duck.

IN OTHER FIELDS the DPP's critics are extremely worried about what they see as an alarming strand running through the inquiry – the reluctance of the Director to drop or delay cases where officers are under heavy suspicion of having indulged in the same corrupt practices in the past that defendants are currently alleging in their trials. The argument, that men in custody should be entitled to wait until the outcome of the Countryman inquiries before their cases go forward, is hard to disagree with.

So far the DPP has only had reports on four officers, but he has now had these for long enough for justifiable concern. There is no doubt that he finds his present position an invidious one. In the Blair Peach inquiry, for example, he, like any straight-thinking policeman in London, finds it appallingly embarrassing to have to confess that it seems totally impossible to find which of six identified police officers struck the fatal blow – even to the extent that he can be charged, never mind convicted.

And the DPP knows that if the Countryman inquiry comes to nothing the position will be the same as in the three deaths – a massive silence and the public, once again, left completely in ignorance of the truth. The indications are that in Countryman's case the results are going to be more positive. But if charges are preferred in some cases, a wider question will then emerge, and one which is not yet being faced. If even a small proportion of the allegations, bearing in mind the problems, are sufficiently strong to bring to court, it is crystal clear that there must be more behind them, well-founded but incapable of legal proof, which are just as important in the overall picture.

It is already being said privately that if Burt's inquiry was allowed to expand into all the claims being made to it, it could go on indefinitely. Which is where the most crucial aspect of all – the question of public confidence in the police – begins to arise. Somewhere a line has to be drawn. In the next few months, before it passes on to political circles, it is in the DPP's office that a series of decisions will be made which will to a large extent determine where that line will be.

Peter Chippindale is a reporter on London Weekend Television's The London Programme.

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POLICE 2
Roy Carr-Hill and Nicholas Stern

Increased spending on 'law and order' may only make matters worse

More police, more crime

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT is pledged to increase the numbers and effectiveness of the police. 'Law and order', long prominent in the party's political platform, has been stressed increasingly as the crime rate has risen – from 'only' 472,489 recorded indictable[1] offences in England and Wales in 1946 and 479,710 in 1956, to 1,199,859 in 1966 and 2,135,700 in 1976. During that time the clear-up rate (the proportion of offences solved) has oscillated between 40 and 50 per cent. Would more police officers have resulted in a slower rise in the number of recorded offences, or in an improved clear-up rate? Our analysis of recent criminal statistics suggests that the answer may be no.

Of course, it is difficult to distinguish cause from effect. For example, a larger number of police officers in one area would be likely to increase the expectation that more offenders would be caught. That might act as a deterrent and so reduce the number of offences. On the other hand, the more police officers there were, the more offences would be likely to be recorded. But an increased number of recorded offences would stretch the resources of the police force and possibly reduce the clear-up rate. Finally, a larger number of recorded offences and a lower proportion of crimes solved might lead the Home Office to allocate more police to the area.

In our analysis, we were particularly interested in the (unmeasured) number of *real* offences, so we tried to disentangle this from other factors. We examined the level of recorded offences per capita, the clear-up rate and the number of police per capita for each of the police districts in England and Wales for the three most recent census years – 1961, 1966 and 1971. We also looked at the proportion of young males in each area, the class balance, the severity of punishment (measured by the proportion of those convicted sent to prison) and the likelihood of detection. The Table shows our findings for urban police districts in 1966.

How would a *one per cent increase* in the factors listed in the vertical columns affect the number of recorded offences per capita, the clear-up rate and the number of police per capita?

1% increase in:	% change in recorded offences per capita	1% increase in:	% change in clear-up rate	1% increase in	% change in police per capita
Clear-up rate	−0.79	**Recorded offences per capita**	0.45	**Clear-up rate**	−0.28
Severity of punishment	−0.28	**Number of police per capita**	−1.57	**Proportion of middle-class in population**	−0.56
Proportion of males aged 15-24 in population	0.40	**Proportion of males aged 15-24 in population**	−0.51	**Population density**	0.04
Proportion of working-class in population	0.42	**Proportion of working-class in population**	−0.10	**Rate of unemployment**	0.06
Total rateable value per unit area	0.20	**Proportion of violent offences**	0.12		
Expenditure per police officer	0.45				

Urban police districts, 1966. (Figures have been omitted where the impact would be insignificant.)

WE CAN SEE that an increase in the severity of punishment and in the likelihood of detection do indeed reduce recorded offences – but only slightly. In 1966, for example, we estimate that a ten per cent increase in the clear-up rate (say from 40 to 44 per cent) would have reduced the level of recorded offences by eight per cent, while a ten per cent increase in the proportion of convicted offenders imprisoned (say from 20 to 22 per cent) would have reduced recorded offences by only three per cent – some support, perhaps, for the old adage that the certainty of punishment is more important than its intensity. (Of course, a harsh deterrent may not only reduce the level of actual offences, but may also encourage individuals to take more care that their actions are not recorded as offences.)

A more striking link was found between the increased numbers of police per capita and increased expenditure per police officer on the one hand, and an increase in the number of recorded offences on the other. This does not necessarily suggest that police commit offences. More or better-equipped police are likely to see, hear of, and record more incidents as offences. They may also lead the public to report minor offences which are difficult to solve, or not worth solving: this would help to explain our finding that increased numbers of police have a *negative* effect on the clear-up rate. But if that is the case, how can the clear-up rate be increased?

[1] Those offences where the accused has the right to demand trial by jury. The vast majority, around 90 per cent, are thefts without violence against the person.

In the red corner
Herbert Marcuse.
In the blue corner
Talcott Parsons.

Swedish sociologist, Göran Therborn adds up the points contributed to Twentieth Century thought by the opposing theories of two of its most significant social thinkers who died last year.

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It certainly improves where violent offences are concerned, since violent offenders are more easily identified, but one cannot seriously argue for more violent offences so that clear-up rates can be boosted. Smaller police districts seem to do better than larger ones, which casts doubt on the wisdom of the amalgamations of police districts which took place in the late 1960s.

As for the numbers of police to be found in any one area, this seems best understood in terms of the ease with which officers can be recruited, rather than a positive allocation policy: there were more police per capita in areas where unemployment was high and fewer where it was low. The more middle-class an area, the fewer police there were per capita – contrary to what one might expect, given the strong wish of the well-heeled to have their property adequately defended.

It is not true that areas with more young males always had more offences: in fact, they had fewer offences than other areas in 1961, more in 1966 and about the same in 1971. This may reflect a shift in relations between the police and young people, from paternalistic attention in the Fifties (so that fewer of their offences were officially recorded) to antagonism by the mid-Sixties, moving on to a more general formalisation of police relations with the public as a whole.

WHAT ARE the implications of our analyis? First, deterrence is not a serious policy option if its aim is to reduce the level of recorded indictable offences. The possible 'benefit' of reducing recorded offences by two or three per cent would hardly justify the 'cost' of a ten per cent increase in the prison population. And while an increase in the detection rate might look more promising as a means of reducing offences, it is very hard to see how this might be achieved. Certainly one cannot assume that extra or better-equipped police will increase the overall proportion of crimes solved; if anything it would seem to have the reverse effect.

Second, we should expect that if the government carries out its policy of spending more on a larger and better-equipped force, the result will be more recorded offences, not less. And we must watch out for the argument that the still higher level of recorded offences will require still more expenditure on police.

Finally, we must remember that the police exercise enormous discretion in what they choose to record and members of the public are continually deciding whether or not to report an event to the police[2]. Changes in police recording practices and in the public's willingness to report can result in substantial changes in the levels of recorded offences, but may have nothing at all to do with the number of crimes that are actually committed.

[2]There was for many years a paragraph emphasising this in the annual Home Office publication *Criminal Statistics*. It was dropped in 1949.

(The authors' research, *Crime, the Police and Criminal Statistics,* was published last year by Academic Press.)

ZIMBABWE
Christopher Hitchens

Lord Soames's decisions as Governor do not inspire confidence

Whose side are we on?

IT MAY OR MAY NOT be the fault of Lord Soames, but the British presence in Rhodesia is at present lacking several of the major attributes of an impartial authority. Considering the immense delicacy of the issues involved, and the tremendous trust displayed so far by the Patriotic Front, several recent decisions can only be described as destructive and short-sighted.

The Lusaka and London accords called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the country. But Lord Soames has decided to let armed South African regular troops remain on Rhodesian soil. The pretext (that they are needed to guard the Beit bridge which joins the two countries and over which sanctions-busting oil tankers used to run every day) is a thin enough one, but the point is that it violates the cease-fire agreement one hundred per cent. The government of Kenya has threatened to withdraw its troops from the Commonwealth peace-keeping force if they are compelled to share Rhodesian territory with the South Africans. It is difficult to see what we owe to Botha in this situation. *Either* the South Africans were asked to leave and simply refused, which would show a critical weakness of British nerve, *or* they were not asked to leave, which would show a betrayal of British good faith. This is the chief lapse in policy so far, but it is not the only one.

In private briefings, and even in one or two public asides, British sources in Salisbury have said that the South African troops by their presence 'prevent a collapse of white morale'. If this means anything at all, it means (like all other excuses based on 'white morale') that the apartheid forces can stay there for ever.

The Lusaka and London accords said that the forces of both sides would be confined as far as possible to barracks, and that breaches of discipline would be the responsibility of the commanders of the unit concerned. The last part is perhaps the most important one. Both parts, in any event, seem to have been violated by the recent shooting of maverick ZAPU guerrillas by Rhodesian security forces. First, the Rhodesian forces seem to be allowed to roam at will. Second, the ZAPU commanders, who on present form might have been expected to treat indiscipline with due seriousness, do not seem to have been consulted at all.

THE ACCORDS also provided for the grounding of the Rhodesian air force. This was primarily to prevent Loard Soames from declaring war on Zambia or Mozambique, but it was also understood to comprehend the activities of the air force within the country itself (especially as it is largely South African-trained and financed and occasionally South African-manned). We now learn that Lord Soames came within fifteen minutes of ordering an airstrike on guerrilla positions last week, which would have ended the ceasefire at once. This hardly inspires confidence.

Nor does the decision to allow 'auxiliary forces' to continue their operations. Their name is a euphemistic cover for private armies owing loyalty to Muzorewa or Sithole. Their reputation for brutality is well-earned. Their unfettered activity is part of the second flaw in the British posture, which is partiality and arbitrariness in the conduct of the election.

Bishop Muzorewa's campaign was allowed to get under way, often using government facilities, well before Lord Soames had even got around to legalising the parties supporting the Patriotic Front. His early lead is probably being dissipated by the return of the exiled leaders, but it did involve effective British connivance nonetheless. The electoral arrangements, which closely mirror those made for the last 'test of opinion', do not require proper constituencies and lead to a system of tribal voting which, in the worst case, could leave the Rhodesian Front MPs with a strategic position in the House.

For some reason as yet unexplained, the British authorities are obstructing and delaying the arrival of monitors and observers to see fair play in the voting. The teams have been in readiness for departure for some time, but the Foreign Office keeps postponing authorisation on the dubious grounds that the Governor is not yet ready to receive them. This harms both the spirit and the letter of the Lusaka and London accords, which agreed that the Commonwealth could send observers and guarantee 'effective international supervision'.

The basic failing of the British position, as regards security, as regards the presence of the South Africans, and as regards the conduct of the voting, is that Lord Soames does not have enough reliable personnel under his actual, rather than nominal, command. In default of these, he is having to use the old UDI civil servants and police and thereby, as the saying goes, he is 'undermining his credibility'. (For instance, the present administration has still not got around to releasing all of those illegally detained for political activities under the previous regime.)

It is seriously proposed that the elections go forward with a force of 1200 Commonwealth soldiers, more than half of them British, to protect them. The Commonwealth has said that this force could be doubled (for instance by asking India and Canada to join). This suggestion, which is accompanied by a firm offer to provide the troops, does not seem over-ambitious. In the meantime, the positions already won by so much hardship and sacrifice are being given up without a struggle – at least without a struggle by Her Majesty's Government.

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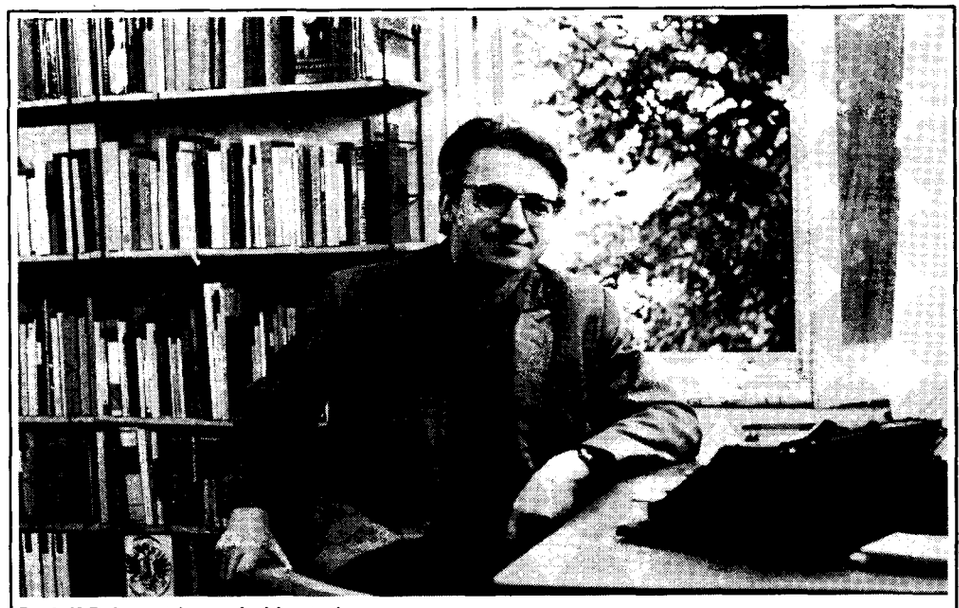
Unite, or destroy the earth

RUDOLF BAHRO, born in 1935, served as party functionary, editor and union official in the apparatus of the East German state. In 1977 he published a book, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*,* which earned him an eight year prison sentence for 'espionage'. After considerable international pressure, he was released from prison last year and compelled to emigrate to West Germany, where he now lives. The following is an address he gave to the conference of the West German environmentalist party.



Rudolf Bahro at home in his study

Der Spiegel

THE 'GREEN' PARTY already have their sights on more than just ecology. It is clear from all the literature I've seen that they stand for the general emancipation of human beings, men and women, and they want to overthrow all conditions in which people are debased and neglected. But this was precisely the categorical imperative of the young Marx. General emancipation will never come about if we destroy the earth itself.

And this destruction can only be prevented if we mobilise people on the basis of their most fundamental emancipatory impulses. Protest alone, simple opposition or resistance, is not enough. No programme can be based on throwing sand in the machine. We need a positive goal, for only then will the remedy prove to grow side by side with the danger.

I am convinced, moreover, that discussion between socialists and ecologists, if conducted frankly and in public, will not lead to division but will bring together all those elements that have an eye to history, and above all to the future ...

In West Germany, concepts such as 'communist', and even 'socialist', are tabooed in a way that is unparalleled anywhere else in Western Europe. Before all else, we socialists must understand properly where the roots of this lie, and then act in such a way that we can be proud to call ourselves by our proper name.

I have myself shown how and why it is that in Eastern Europe, as a result of the particular history of Russia and the Soviet Union, indeed of the entire non-capitalist world, there is a system that is called communist, and calls itself socialist, without in any sense being so.

Anyone who seeks to improve conditions here, in the Federal Republic, must work to construct a new concept of socialism, one which will in fact be the original concept, stretching back to a German and West European Marx, who was moreover an unswerving internationalist.

It stretches still further back, in fact, back to the broad spread of utopian socialists and communists of the 18th and 19th centuries, who stemmed largely from the bourgeois class, and sought to turn the inheritance of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment to serve the oppressed and underdeveloped of their own society.

WE WHO CALL ourselves communists and socialists today must cease calling the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe socialist or communist countries. The same naturally goes for China, for example.

If we do not, then we cannot but be misunderstood. Our goal is in no way an improved, purified version of this 'actually existing socialism'. It is a completely different system, as far removed from this 'actual socialism' as from the Western world. We cannot aim at anything that they have over there, with our two or three thousand years of West European civilisation behind us, from the ancient Greeks and the time of the *Iliad*. And we do not aim at anything like it, in no way whatsoever.

To make this credible we must show ourselves by our actions to be committed democrats, free from any secret reservations. We must acknowledge and practise, in our own organisational principles, the freedom to dissent. It is our own responsibility to make this clear and to restore the great concept of socialism back to the position it justly merits, particularly in our country, Germany.

After all, this is where Marx and Engels were born, and the philosophy of Marxism has its distant origins in the Tübingen school. Democratic socialists and communists of all countries, moreover, have in the figure of a woman who lived among us Germans – until she was murdered – Rosa Luxemburg, a human model who can today reunite us. We should act in such a way that we can say to people: look at this person, and you will see who we are and what we stand for.

It is clearer today than ever that the socialist attempt has so far been too narrowly based, even in its best form, where it has not been manipulated by a state bureaucracy.

Today, socialism is far more, and must be far more, than a working-class and trade-union movement of the traditional kind. Otherwise, the struggle for a just distribution of the social product between wage-earners and entrepreneurs in the rich industrial countries of the West will simply be fought on the backs of the rest of humanity.

We can no longer behave as if the fate of us all depended on the outcome of domestic class struggles over real wages, or on what party is to have power in the state. The tremendous contradictions on the North-South and East-West axes, which are inseparably bound up together, overspill this context. This is something we cannot afford to forget, whether we define ourselves as Socialists, as Ecologists, or are seeking a concept that will bring these principles together. To pose the question purely in a domestic context – and in this sense Western Europe as a whole is still domestic politics – could only give rise to highly undesirable perspectives.

IF IT IS permissible to quote Lenin, he was fond of the proverb that the biggest animal, for the mouse, is the cat. This reminds me a bit of the way in which the alternative forces in our country react to the established parties, for example, or to the question of nuclear power.

The established parties, in actual fact, permanently reject the demand of our time,

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which is to draw up a long-run policy for human survival, and above all else to practise this. The question of nuclear power stations is simply one characteristic example of how our society deals in general with the question of technology. If it could be compelled to renounce a technology that was presently available, this example would have a significance that could hardly be over-rated.

But have we got our priorities right? For the danger of nuclear power stations, should they in fact be built, pales before the dangers that lie in the wake of stationing a new generation of nuclear missiles in this country. If a new round of the arms race is set in motion, and this is quite evidently one of the most powerful driving forces of economic growth, of the waste of resources, and of environmental damage, then the movement against nuclear power could be like the dog barking round the legs of the elephant.

In this context, we must consider very responsibly the disposition of the political parties. Beyond the borders of our own country, vis-a-vis our eastern partner and adversary, vis-a-vis Western Europe and in connection with a new North-South economic order, what difference does it actually make which of the two major parties (each unsatisfactory) happens to head the government?

A movement that seeks to rescue a whole civilisation must be capable, sooner or later, of thinking its way out of the present overall interconnection. It must think on behalf of the totality. If a party to which we might formerly have belonged, or which we stood close to, has disappointed us, that is in itself no solution to the dilemma in which we are placed.

The question of the SPD[1] is the most fundamental question of the balance of forces, politically and psychologically, in the Federal Republic of Germany. We must be sufficiently far-sighted, and sufficiently determined, to change this balance of forces. Then we shall perhaps change the SPD as well.

But can we hope to achieve any really significant results without the potential that this party represents? I believe such a strategy could only lead at best to a Pyrrhic victory, precisely for the purest of ecological desires.

Critical and effective challenge to the social-reformist tendency is necessary; confrontation with it based on resentment would be disastrous.

For the time being, we should leave as much as possible open. For all the reduction of real differences in the government policy and administrative practice, it is not true, at the level of potentiality and perspective, that both cats are equally grey. We should not forget the experience of Weimar, and what happened when the German communists of that time believed they should concentrate their attack on the social-democrats, since these were the main prop of the bourgeoisie and hence worse even than the bourgeoisie itself.[2]

OUR WEST EUROPEAN civilisation, both here and in those other parts of the globe where it has taken root, cannot be saved and reconciled with other civilisations unless a broad concentration of politcal forces comes into being, mobilising the power of the masses to change our overall direction. To me this concentration seems inconceivable without the various forces of the socialist tradition standing at the centre of such a bloc.

For we shall not succeed in forcing our way through the ecological bottle-neck, or bringing to a halt what is called economic 'growth', unless we first manage to bring under rigorous control the *ecological mechanism* of monopoly competition for maximum profits, rising sales and market shares – which are all ultimately one and the same thing – and proceed to replace this completely as the regulatory mechanism.

And as for the alienated structure of people's needs, which we, as ecologists, see as so important to overcome, subjectively perhaps the most important thing, is this not above all else the reverse side of that same economic principle?

The psychological revolution that we all see as urgently needed is precisely directed against the mode of consumption created by capitalism. It cannot be broken, if we leave its economic motor untouched.

All concrete measures that the ecological concept proposes count in fact on a transformation effected via the state, from the municipal level, through the provincial level, up to the national and international levels. We must develop a policy for transforming the state machine, in the long run, into an instrument of social control over all the separate monopoly interests. This requires a mass movement, but a movement which will encompass the whole range of forces which can be made sensitive to these problems, and which will drive a wedge between the state apparatus, which itself consists of human beings, and the monopoly lobbies of all kinds. Then the state apparatus can function in a new direction, one prescribed to it by the interests of the majority.

To summarise:

- The socialists need the ecologists, for the ensuring of survival is the precondition for their attaining their traditional goals;
- The ecologists need the socialists, for survival can only be ensured by disconnecting the motor of monopoly competition.

WE MUST NOW go on to expand the political and psychological context in a further very necessary dimension. We must appeal to all people of good will who have a stake in the fundamental premises of our civilisation and want to preserve and carry forward its values. What I have in mind here are the liberal traditions, and above all committed Christians.

The Christians need us socialists. I have written that capitalism is the epoch that is furthest from God. Christians, even entire churches, are now taking up a position on all the really key questions for the fate of our civilisation, opposing themselves to the effects of the prevailing economic system. But a moral appeal is ineffective without political action. We must prepare the political context for this.

We socialists, in turn, need the Christians. Because of our former task of representing the underprivileged masses, we find it hard to abandon the accumulation of material well-being in favour of other, subjective, values. We must open our ears to the precept that teaches us not to store up treasures on earth.

Here, today, in countries as rich as ours, the true sense of the New Testament is once again as clear as day. It was not to the poor that Christ preached poverty, not to the humiliated and oppressed that he preached humility, nor to the shy wallflowers that he preached modesty in enjoyment.

Our experience with the welfare state has brought home to us once again how the need for some kind of religious transcendence is a disposition of human nature, of our spiritual world, i.e. a reality of the mind. Marxists, too, can take note of this. And, moreover, whenever a real cultural transformation has taken place in history, this has never been without a mobilisation that has stretched right into this most intimate sphere of human motivation

In our own civilisation, Christ was incontestably the first teacher of our ultimate goal, the first teacher of the general emancipation of humankind.

In short, we must seek to bring into one single movement everything that strives in the direction of our goal, that of rescuing this civilisation, and world civilisation in general, and bringing about the general emancipation of human beings – men *and* women. We must throw out all dogmatic ballast that prevents such unification. Nothing could be more in the way than traditional left sectarianism, or any other kind.

Anyone is welcome to cultivate his favourite theoretical ideas, his particular way of access to the common cause, and thus make a positive contribution. But no one should stand in the way.

We must offer responsible people in the established parties, and in all three established parties, who still aspire to something more than the daily round of political arithmetic and administration, and who in no way need all follow us in the same way, an ideological prop, the prop of an ideal, as a means of regeneration. Mere negation and rejection is no programme here, but can only lead to a sham-revolutionary subjectivism.

THERE WAS NEVER a time when people were so united as they are now on the existence of the problems with which humanity is presently faced. Should we not assist different people of different views to converge together in whatever way is appropriate?

It seems to me that we should consider at greater length and in more detail the formulation of our goal and the way of linking up into a movement that can transform our country, which is still a thing of beauty, starting from within. We should develop our programme in such a way that it contains, in embryo, the possibility of winning a majority in the long run.

Today we have perhaps the authentic and potentially successful beginnings of a mass movement of cultural transformation. So as not to endanger it by short-sighted adventures, we should not be too hasty in fixing our definitions. We must take the time needed to arrive at a clear concept, involving both the majority of those already participating in the movement, and a far wider constituency as well, a concept that is oriented not just to the local, regional and provincial levels, but to the national and international levels as well, and can take root at these levels.

Then what has started out on a small scale at the grass roots, and from the midst of our existential problems, can develop into something very big; it is already coming together on a broader basis.

(Translated by David Fernbach)

[1]Socialist Party Deutschland: the party of the Schmidt government

[2]The Communist doctrine that the reformists were the 'real' enemy meant that there was no united front against Hitler. The Communists imagined that Hitler's rule would be a brief prelude to their own takeover.

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London Diary

☐ When you're lying half-dead on Afghanistan's plains,
And the women come down to cut up the remains,
Just roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
And go to your God like a soldier.

That's from memory, and I fear the original last line reads 'Gawd'. But all those letters in *The Times* from old Khyber hands, and all those wise counsels from knowing liberals, to the effect that this time the Russkies have bitten off more than they can chew, seem hopelessly wrong. The Russians don't care about 'world opinion' any more than they care about opinion in Kiev or Sofia. Nor do they have to put up with any sniping from critical or bleeding-heart journalists on the home front. The odd thing is that many people in the West (usually the ones who talk about 'retaliation in kind') actually seem to *envy* the Russians these deformities. It's as if freedom, such of it as we enjoy, rather disabled the West. This is a very nasty atmosphere, and exactly the wrong lessons are being drawn in it. And, oh God, here comes the Sultan of Oman with another 'shopping list' of much-needed armaments. This time he's sure to get them. You can't beat a Sultan for timing.

☐ The full vileness of the Russian aggression does not become apparent until one considers its effect on the wider scene. I've just been reading what Frank Harris said about the Afghan War when he was being adopted as Tory candidate for Hackney in 1889. He yelled:

> It seems to me, therefore, that the politics of France, Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain in the future matter nothing; that Russia on the one side, and America on the other, will decide whatever questions concern them without reference to what [the aforementioned] may say, or think, or do.

He was too patriotic to suggest that Britain might join that club of subordinates so soon. But in the Eighties we are going to have to struggle just as hard to refuse that choice and refute that theory. Come to think of it, Frank Harris wasn't always a reliable source.

☐ I wish there was any truth in the comparison between Carter's recent policy and that of pre-war 'appeasement'. Because for the analogy to hold, it would have been necessary for Britain, France and America to have spent the Thirties (1) propping up anti-Nazi regimes and parties of any old shade or stripe anywhere in the world; (2) offering homes to persecuted Jews (and not even in somebody else's country); (3) complaining endlessly about fascist violation of human rights and (4) spending every available penny on rearmament. Which they didn't. It would probably have worked against fascism. People get angry when the same mixture, in any proportion from the savage to the mild, doesn't work against communism. I think I know why it doesn't, but I'm not saying because I don't want to go on any more of those lists (you know, the ones fascists weren't put on in the Thirties).

☐ We could, of course, have an International Year of the illegally occupied territory. To the Russians in Kabul we could add the South Africans in Rhodesia and Namibia, the Turks in Cyprus, the Israelis in the West Bank, most people in Kurdistan, the Indonesians in East Timor and rather too many others. We should also include the Russians in Estonia, where I notice it is proposed to hold one series of Olympic events. The sheer gall of this ought to be enough to cancel the whole thing outright. Many people favour screwing up the Olympics on purely aesthetic grounds. While this is a sound scheme, I think the excuse ought to be political in order to cause maximum trouble.

☐ If the Russians claim to have made their 'last territorial demand in Asia', the British police have not finished their creeping assault on our remaining liberties. The depressing thing about police attacks on the rights of the defence is some of the arguments against them. It is said that ten guilty men should go free rather than one innocent man be convicted – and this gives the libertarian case the appearance of being 'soft on the criminal'. Is it not obvious that if a crime is committed, and an innocent man convicted of it, that a guilty man has *ipso facto* gone free? So that you have two crimes and two victims for the price of one. All the police are really saying is that they would prefer to have been judges and barristers instead of coppers but didn't want to sit the exams. If we are so sure of their rectitude, why don't we just let them pick people up and take them away?

☐ In no other country are the police surrounded by such an overwhelming odour of high-minded, long-suffering probity. Even in Britain, now just emerging from decades of childlike trust in the boys in blue, it was not always thus. For example, the old refrain 'If you want to know the time, ask a policemen', is now accepted as an indication of popular trust and affection where bobbies were concerned. But, as the original music-hall smash makes plain, it alluded to the policemen's habit of stealing watches from those they found wandering and drunk.

Every member of the force
Has a watch and chain *of course*

was sung with heavy irony (how else *could* it have been sung?). I failed utterly to convince some reactionary lawyers of this during dinner recently. But you will find a reference to the truth in Sir Robert Mark's memoirs (p. 19 of the paperback edition). He says it was a disillusioning discovery for a young constable to make. I almost believe him.

☐ This column hails the 999 bookshop chain in New York. To any customer who asks for a copy of Henry Kissinger's godawful memoirs, this estimable firm gives a free paperback edition of William Shawcross's *Sideshow*. The whole point about reptile antidote, as I understand, is to slap it on as swiftly as you can. There is no point in tinkering with the problem of poisonous ingestation. Next month, *Sideshow* comes out in paperback here (Fontana £1.95). Perhaps Lord Weidenfeld would like to make a gesture as Kissinger's publisher? Or could Hatchards step into the breach? No doubt something can be worked out.

☐ One hears regrettably seldom from Alastair Forbes. But his watch on the press and its doings is as unsleeping as ever. He has just sent us an example of *The Times*'s house style which deserves passing on. Writing about Heathrow airport earlier this week, the improbable Mr Dan van der Vat found that he had allowed himself to say the following:

> Countries tend to get the immigration service they deserve. The fact that successive British governments have never quite brought themselves to calling a spade a spade has left the service with the task of . . . etc.

If he's trying to be funny he has failed badly. If he was trying to be clear he has done even worse. What are all those expensive subeditors thinking about?

☐ I was in a pessimistic mood when I wrote from New Delhi last week that the Indian judiciary would have a hard time with all the charges facing Mrs Gandhi and her ruffianly entourage. But it only took a week for the courts to make up their minds on two charges against the woman, which would have carried a maximum of 14 years in the slammer and – more important – disqualification from public office. Having sat on them for months, the judges simply threw them out. Some of the charges against Sanjay look like going the same way – though it will be harder to laugh off his existing conviction and two-year sentence, against which he is currently appealing. The new Law Minister, Mr P. Shiv Shankar, appeared in person for his distinguished client. He also made a few noises about the need to reorganise the judiciary, which he called 'a vestige of British imperialism'. A lot of Mrs Gandhi's supporters find it convenient to talk out of the left side of their mouths on occasion – I suspect that Mr P. Shiv Shankar has more sweeping reforms in mind than the mere removal of the All England Law Reports. In this country, thank God, we have courts and judges gloriously reminiscent of British imperialism, and proudly independent of any government fiat or pressure. That this is so is shown by the decision of Lord Widgery and Mr Justice Park, who found on Tuesday that the Director of Public Prosecutions cannot tell a hawk from a handsaw, let alone a 'fifty per cent chance of success' from a frivolous prosecution. Now you, gentle readers, will have to pay all the costs. But this is a small price to pay for liberty, as I'm sure you'll agree.

Christopher Hitchens

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ More commuters will fail to get seats as Southern Region spends £26 million to introduce new trains at a rate of one a week on some of its busiest suburban routes into Waterloo. 'But people will be able to stand in more comfort,' said a British Rail spokesman. – *Daily Telegraph* (Rita Rhodes)

☐ Britain has sent a large consignment of footballs to Rhodesia for Patriotic Front guerrillas, but all arrived flat and no pump was supplied. – *Guardian* (Kate Williams)

☐ People who want to get to the new Royal Surrey County Hospital from the centre of Guildford may find themselves driving endlessly round the one-way system looking for a direction sign. But they will be out of luck. Surrey County Council has no money for sign posts to the hospital, which opened on Wednesday, from the town. – *Surrey Advertiser* (A. Brodie)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Private education accounts

From David P. Rogerson

I read with interest your stirring words about the need for expertise, science, truth etc., only to gasp with incredulity at your reference to Rick Rogers's article as 'a straightforward example of how to deal with Tory mythology'. If the Left is to send the Tories packing, it will have to do much better than this.

To challenge the funding of independent school places by central and local government is legitimate, provided the case is fairly put. In his tabulation, Mr Rogers gives a figure of £87m for LEA funding, but in the text he recognises that this includes some £47m for special education. Here is the first correction of Mr Rogers's statistics – the £47m must be deducted since it is in no way a support of privilege: LEAs finance independent special education only when they have no suitable places of their own.

Mr Rogers is entitled to draw attention to the rating and tax relief associated with charitable status but not to distort the truth by alleging that the 'profits' of independent schools are exempt from income tax. Surely he knows that charitable status is dependent upon the school's being conducted on a strictly non-profit-making basis. The savings resulting from charitable status usually make it possible for children to continue in the school in spite of their being orphaned or of some other financial crisis. However, having argued that we independent schools are responsible in our stewardship, I accept that there is, under this head, a transfer from public to private sector.

The figures for funding of places (corrected), together with rate and tax relief, add up to £135m. The rest of the 'half billion' in Mr Rogers's case, relates to government financing of university degree and teacher training courses – some £330m. This, of course, is a piece of statistical nonsense, since it is based upon a pure guess that half of the 40,000 teachers in the independent sector have had their fees paid by government. Moreover, to add this long-term figure to a statement of *annual* outgoings, is sheer incompetence. A correction of this statistic is no easy task but the order of magnitude can be indicated. Since staff turnover in the independent sector is relatively low, it is generous to Mr Rogers's case if we put it at ten per cent. So, *using his figures*, we have, *annually*, 2,000 new entrants into the private sector at £10,000 a head, i.e. £20m. Adding this sum, we have a grand total of £155m in place of his half billion – a significant degree of error!

In a remarkably muddled paragraph, seeking to list 'other costs', Mr Rogers states that 'student teachers can undertake teaching practice in private schools'. Surely this represents some return by the private school to the state system. Mr Rogers's whole case about teacher training does not stand up to scrutiny. A high proportion of teachers currently in the private sector would be lost to the profession if their present employment ended. Some of them who are now doing a useful job, could not, in truth, cope with the conditions in state schools (which, under Thatcher-Boyson, cannot fail to deteriorate). Others, including some of the most able, would not entertain a state appointment and would have no difficulty in enhancing their pay prospects by moving into industry, commerce or the higher echelons of the civil service.

Both in this particular and in general, the only rational solution lies not in private school bashing but in the radical improvement of the state schools. The majority of parents with whom I have frank discussion make it clear that they would be delighted to send their child to the local state school if the LEA were able to make adequate provision. Ninety per cent of my parents opt for independent education without a penny of support from government. Such concern for the immediate welfare of one's offspring is in no way incompatible with grave misgivings about the attack on the state schools launched by the present government.

After fighting the educational nonsense and spurious statistics of the Black Papers throughout the Seventies, must we who care about the children in the Eighties fight on two fronts – a 'Black' government policy and a spate of 'Red Papers' in which respect for factual accuracy is subordinated to the demands of ideology?

Hulme Hall School, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire

From Tim Devlin

The menu compiled by Rick Rogers on the nation's so-called subsidies to private schools (NS 4 January) was not worth the paper it was written on and should not have been dished up in your magazine.

The annual figure for teacher training and degree courses of the 1,500 to 2,000 teachers who join the independent sector a year is not more than £5m a year. So for £300m to £400m of the respective £512.7m and £654.7m please read £4m and £5m.

It is invidious to charge independent schools for the training of their teachers because they are teaching the children of parents – not always as well-heeled as Mr Rogers supposes – who are paying their rates for local education at the same time. If he does put this charge at the schools' door, please could he be fair and deduct from it the tuition charges which the teachers at the independent schools are saving the taxpayer? This was estimated by the Labour Government – not their greatest friends – as being not less than £150m in 1977. A proper estimate now might be £200m a year. So please for the £300m to £400m bill substitute a saving of £146m to £196m.

Similarly, it is unfair to land the schools with a bill for £40m or so for educating children from the armed forces at independent boarding schools. I regret as much as you do that they are mainly officers' children, but in fairness Mr Rogers must deduct the costs to the nation of providing alternative education for these children, either by providing more local authority maintained boarding places or building more British Forces Schools overseas.

Likewise, the £35m for educating handicapped children at independent special schools should be put down as a saving rather than as an expense. Independent schools contribute a great deal to the national provision for educating the handicapped and this was acknowledged by the Warnock Report.

Stripped of these figures, the bill is made up of a speculative estimate, which the author admits, of the cost of charitable status and of the cost of local authority take-up of places, many of which they were committed to under the old direct grant scheme.

Robbed of its fallacies, the bill comes fairly close to the £50m a year subsidy estimated by Christopher Price MP – again not one of the independent schools' greatest friends – which takes no account of the schools' savings to the country in plant, transport costs, school meals etc., which could be as high as £500m a year. No industry which is saving the country as much as this should fairly be described as a lame duck and the schools are proud of their 5 per cent foreign influx which brings in foreign currency in fees alone of at least £25m a year.

Independent Schools Information Service, 26 Caxton St., London SW1

From L. H. Moody

Mr Rick Rogers resurrects that tired old story about the diplomatic service subsidising the private boarding school sector. When a member of the diplomatic service of whatever rank is posted abroad and has school-age children, he has basically two choices. He can take his children with him and take pot luck on the education services in the host country in the knowledge that this will mean that his children's education will be interrupted every 18 months or so. Alternatively, he can leave them at home with all the emotional stresses and strains that this imposes, but with the satisfaction of knowing that there will be some continuity in their education. If he chooses the second course, and unless he has an obliging friend or relative prepared to act as a surrogate parent for perhaps as many as ten years, he must perforce arrange for his children to be educated at boarding school. It would be very handy indeed if the state education system provided sufficient reliable boarding schools to meet this need, but it does not and the use of the private sector is really not a matter of choice at all. Perhaps Mr Rogers will tell us whether he expects my members to meet from their own pockets an expenditure created entirely by the demands of their employment. There is, I suppose, another alternative. My members could put their children into local authority care for the whole of their overseas services.

Civil Service Union, 5 Praed Street, London W2

Rick Rogers replies: I know 40,000 teachers don't go through private schools each year. But training teachers and graduates is an investment made by the state, not the private sector. The current value of that investment relied on by the private sector to survive is as I quoted. Each year, the state cannot use that much teacher power to plug gaps in and enhance the state schools. I call that an 'annual cost' to the nation – and the point was to show that unsubsidised the private sector would collapse. The final cost would mean further additions and subtractions on both sides.

Incidentally, from his figures Tim Devlin has at least conceded the £136m (now updated to £179m) he was denying a year ago. In an earlier letter (NS 22 November 1978) he wrote: 'The figure of £136m annual subsidy which has been mentioned as the cost to the nation of free places taken up by central and local government is itself grossly inflated ...' What will be conceded in another year's time?

Children in need

From Judith Stone

I'm sure that most of your readers will share my distaste for the style of journalism (typified by the penultimate paragraph of Penelope Mortimer's 'London Diary', NS 4 January) which uses poisonous innuendo as a substitute for informed comment.

However, her reference to International Year of the Child provides an opportunity for me to give an accurate outline of the programme of the UK Association. The Association's message for the year has been that children here have needs which are not being met – as well as children thousands of miles away whose needs are truly desperate. Children's needs are more complex and require more of each one of us than a cheque in the post or a charity parcel of toys for the 'orphans' at Christmas. Our publications on UK children living in poverty, children in care, immigrant children in the UK and other topics continue to be available, free of charge, from our office for anyone who wants to find out what we are really saying and doing for children. It is because we are aware that children here need so much that a large proportion of the money raised in the UK for International Year of the Child will be spent on projects in this country: a children's legal centre, a holiday adventure centre for handicapped children, a programme for latchkey children among others.

International Year of the Child, 85 Whitehall, London SW1

Scottish justice

From Malcolm Rifkind MP

Jason Ditton's article 'Police Malpractice to be Legalised' (NS 14 December) does nothing to help public understanding of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill which was published on 19 December. Mr Ditton's scenario would be just as possible if the police were to abuse their existing powers as if they were to abuse the powers conferred upon them by the Bill. There are remedies in law against such misuse and nothing in the Bill takes away these remedies.

Mr Ditton is now in a position to see his own mistakes by examining more closely the provisions of the Bill, but perhaps I might correct some of his more glaring distortions:

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1) The Bill confers no new right of entry to detain a suspect. 2) A potential witness could not be 'detained'. All the Bill allows a constable to do is to keep a witness with him for the purpose of obtaining (without unreasonable delay) his correct name and address. 3) Mr Ditton implies that police can achieve detention of suspects in detention centres, but detention centres can admit only offenders sentenced by courts of law after conviction. 4) Powers of search and fingerprinting can be exercised only if there have been reasonable grounds for suspicion justifying detention. The Bill provides for the destruction of fingerprints if charges are not proceeded with. 5) Mr. Ditton says 'if the government can rustle up enough Parliamentary time . . . the police action he describes could be legal in Scotland by Christmas this year'. My best hope is that the Bill will become law by mid-1980 after a full and constructive debate. 6) The Bill specifically retains the right to silence for a suspect except for the requirement to give his name and address. The Bill confers a right (where none exists at present) upon a suspect who is detained in the police station to inform a solicitor. 7) The word 'detainee' does not appear in the Bill. 8) The Bill provides stop and search powers (not in existence under the 1953 Prevention of Crime Act) which can help reduce deaths and serious injuries caused by the 'habit' of carrying knives.

Scottish Office, New St Andrews House, St James Centre, Edinburgh EH1 3SX

Nuclear safety

From Ted Pugh

The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate performs a vital function and I do not dispute the main theme of Duncan Campbell's article (NS 7 December) which was that the capability of the Inspectorate must not be diluted.

However, I must correct two fundamental errors which affect the reputation of the CEGB and the Nuclear Power Company and damage public confidence in nuclear power.

It is incorrect to suggest that the NII discovered the deficient concrete at Heysham and the defective tendons at Dungeness 'B'. The small amount of defective concrete at Heysham was detected by Central Electricity Generating Board/Nuclear Power Company engineers following procedures set up for that very purpose and was reported to the NII site inspector. The defective concrete – which represented 0.1 per cent of the 35,000 tons of concrete in the pressure vessel – was removed and replaced.

At Dungeness 'B', checks by the CEGB revealed that 147 out of 315,000 tendon wires were incorrectly installed. Generous allowances in the design of the reactor cover minor deficiencies of this type and other unforeseeable eventualities. This is normal practice in structural engineering. The absence of the 147 wires has no significant effect on the overall strength of the pressure vessel.

Neither of the incidents referred to have in any way affected the integrity of the pre-stressed concrete pressure vessels which are extremely robust structures capable of sustaining all the loadings concerned and more.

Central Electricity Generating Board, Barnett Way, Barnwood, Glos.

Duncan Campbell replies: It is exceedingly irresponsible for a professional engineer to mislead others as to the strength of a structure by quoting percentages of defective parts. A reactor vessel, or anything else, is only as good as its weakest part; a hole in the reactor wall would after all be 0% by weight. The NII's original report (on which the NS article was based) appears to be ambiguous on the point of who actually first discovered the defects; we apologise for our consequent confusion. The fact remains that these faults occur; 35 tons of defective concrete, on Mr Pugh's admission, were poured into Heysham before anyone noticed.

British in N. Ireland

From Hugh Shearman

Your correspondent Aodogan O'Rahilly (NS 4 January), in urging that the British should get out of Northern Ireland, gives a misjudged account of public opinion there. In the first general election for a Northern Ireland legislature in 1921, 66.9 per cent of the first preference votes went to candidates committed to maintaining Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom. In the last election held for a Northern Ireland legislature in 1973, a time of comparable polarisation, 74.4 per cent of first preferences went to candidates so committed, a shift of nearly 12 per cent towards favouring the British connection.

When the results of the university-based 'attitude survey' of 1978 were analysed, it was found that where the policy of amalgamating Northern Ireland with the Irish Republic, either directly or by a federal system, was presented in isolation as a single issue, segregated from other party-political issues, it was approved as the most desirable outcome by only 16.9 per cent of all respondents. The percentage was higher among Roman Catholic respondents – 39.1 per cent – but even this was clearly only a minority opinion.

36 Cliftonville Road, Belfast

From Aodogan O'Rahilly

A mistake has arisen in the sentence in my letter which stated that the area of the six counties in which a majority of the population wanted the occupation forces to remain was 'Belfast and 13 miles around it'. The correct figure should have been 30 miles.

Clondalkin, Co. Dublin

Censorship

From Nicolas Walter

David Holbrook's letter (NS 4 January) shows that he is still unable to grasp two fundamental distinctions. One is between accepting the proposition that some (though not all) pornography derives from or leads to hatred for or exploitation of women and rejecting the proposal that the correct response to this particular type of objectionable material should therefore be criminal prosecution rather than critical condemnation. The other is between refusing to consider serious arguments against pornography or for censorship, which is very rare among those who control publishers and periodicals or radio and television in this country, and rejecting peculiarly unbalanced and abusive arguments on the subject.

Can't he see how absurd it is for someone who favours the suppression of literature he dislikes to complain of literary ostracism when he has published a stream of letters and articles and more than two books a year for 20 years, or for such a successful writer to complain that his 'opposition to pornography' has 'virtually ruined' his 'career as a writer', when anyone who has followed his work can tell him that he bears the seed of ruin in himself?

New Humanist, 88 Islington High Street, London N1

From Jad Adams

Characteristically, David Holbrook fudges the issue in his letter on pornography. He quotes from a feminist source to say that sexist pictures are contemptible, that racist material is contemptible and that there is a link between the two. So far so good. Sexist material on posters, calendars, girlie mags, television and so on, little of which comes anywhere near the ambit of the obscenity laws, is offensive. It should be treated as racist material is.

Hard-core porn is a different kettle of genitals altogether. Explicit pictures showing men and women engaged in joint activities do not exploit women. They exploit sex in the same way that *Gardener's World* exploits flowers. They are specialist publications for people who, for whatever reason, want to see sex as an entertaining pastime divorced from the social framework of relationships. They can be used to display humiliating images of women, but so can magazines on motorcycle maintenance. Sexual explicitness is not, in itself, sexist.

116 Stanstead Road, London SE 23

From David Holbrook

I noticed, of course, the sneer implied in the subtitle 'Martyred?' over my letter about the consequences of stepping out of line on progressive dogma. I am interested to note that your paper considers it funny and fit for such a sneer when a writer is suppressed. I will take one example, a book entitled *Education, Nihilism and Survival*. It was awarded a prize by a progressive organisation, the World Education Fellowship, for 'promoting the social purposes of education'. Yet the book was killed because it was refused favour of a review everywhere except the *Tablet* and the *Times Educational Supplement*. The most interesting feature of the suppression is that, in my case, it is directed against what is essentially a diagnosis of the new kind of fascism in the intellectual fashions of our time, the cult of hate, as a false solution against human meaning and community, a trend of great political danger. For refusing to encounter heretical opinions the 'progressive' area of opinion has much to account for.

Longacre, Haverhill, Stapleford, Cambridge

School sale

From Martin Maycock

Peter Croft (NS 4 January) failed to answer the basic objection to our Borough's proposed sale of multi-ethnic Twyford High School, Acton, to the Church of England. It is undeniable that the church school with a stated intention to give preference in admission to Christian pupils must (if over-subscribed) exclude by definition children from the Hindu/Sikh/Muslim quarter of the Borough's school population, plus Buddhists, Jews, Rastas and the countless legion of the non-believing and the non-committed.

And if you exclude the Asian faiths from the successor to Twyford High School (which currently has Asian languages to A-level), you exclude the overwhelming majority of the Borough's Punjabi/Gujerati community – the largest in Greater London.

Lest your readers be taken in by Councillor Croft's reference to 'some half-dozen protesters', may I point out that those opposing the sale include Twyford pupils, parents, staff and governors, the Ealing branches of all the Burnham teaching unions, Ealing Community Relations Council, the Indian Workers' Association, the Amalgamated Afro-Caribbean Council, Ealing Trades Council, some Anglican clergy and laity, Ealing Quakers, the local press and the Labour opposition on the Borough Council. Quite a coalition.

If the Ealing sale goes through it could be the gloomy precedent for other sales elsewhere.

Ealing High Schools Defence Campaign, 27 Milton Road, London W7

From J. White

Cllr Croft defends the consultation process but makes no mention of a very important change in the crucial question of the admissions policy of the proposed new church school. The official Discussion Document (on which consultation was based) stated: 'The Church of England intends the school to reflect the social and racial composition of the London Borough of Ealing and to be an integral part of the Council's provision.' However, a week after consultation ended a new statement was issued. It said: 'Preference will be given to (i) children of Church of England parents, and (ii) children of parents of other Christian denominations.'

British Humanist Association, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Who is Sylvia?

I have sometimes wondered, in one of the increasingly few idle moments that nowadays seem to come my way, what the Christian name of La Belle Dame Sans Merci can have been. She was, as you will know, that lady spotted in the water meadows by a mounted and rather impressionable knight-at-arms. The poet Keats, so helpful in many other ways (and who but he would think of detailing for us the marginal joys of mellow and fruitful but clammily damp Autumn, not to speak of the somewhat limited appeal of both Grecian urns and Melancholy) is silent on this point, so we must search for indications in the text, and few though these may be, they do contain one excellent pointer. Her hair was long, we are told, a wise move to give it, so to speak, its head and just let it rampage for Kirbygrips had yet, in those feudal days, to be invented. She was beautiful and light of foot 'and her eyes were wild', never a very reassuring sign and sadly indicative of instability. She is given to moaning sweetly, a difficult feat, seems to be in the herbal and health food business and inhabits 'an elfin grot', which is perhaps a smallish residence that goes with the job and is therefore a 'tied' grot.

I need hardly remind you of what happens. The knight-at-arms picks her up, in more senses than one, and puts her on his 'pacing steed', presumably seating her in front of him rather than make her cling on as best she can behind for there is a regretful note in his statement that La Belle Dame blocked the view and that he 'saw nothing else all day long', a feeling fully shared by anybody occupying the hind saddle of a tandem bicycle, protected from the wind though he or she may be and spared the onerous tasks of steering, ringing the bell, and finding the way ('Excuse me, is this Watford?'). But La Belle Dame is, I rejoice to remind you, no supine or lifeless passenger. Quite the contrary in fact 'for sideways she would lean', the poet tells us, and obviously with the intention of helping the horse round corners. As to lean when on horseback, now this way now that, can only be the quite instinctive act of a born equestrienne and plainly points to her coming from a hard-riding family keen on hunting, the chances are that her name is Diana. I would like to think that, as a tribute to the gifted horsewoman, Miss Prior-Palmer, a name all too seldom mentioned in these pages, La Dame was known to chums as Lucinda, but I fear that, as with Kirbygrips, neither Lucinda nor Prior-Palmer had, as names or persons, yet come off the drawing-board.

Although there is a great deal to be said for Keats, I really do prefer it when poets, after extolling some lady for her beauty or her talents or her wit or her light hand with pastry, let us know exactly who they are talking about and introduce us formally by both their names. It is all very well Lord Tennyson going on as he does, and at really extravagant length (don't be misled by that very small section of the poem reproduced in the anthologies) about Maud ('the 'moon-faced darling of all', you recall), but Maud *who*, may one ask? If somebody is invited, nay, positively urged, to come into the garden, one wants to know, before challenging them to a needle game of clock golf, exactly who that somebody is. After all, the vicar may pay a surprise call ('Do I intrude?'), introductions will have to be made, and one doesn't want to look, socially, a clumsy ninny. I rather tend to think that Maud was tacked on to something alliterative such as Maud Merryweather or Maud Majendie or Maud Medlicott. Maud comes from what is obviously a well-heeled and well-born family and therefore Maud Maltravers would have a sort of upper-crust ring to it, besides looking well on the wedding invitation cards ('. . . request the pleasure . . . eldest daughter of Sir Gervase and the Hon. Lady Maltravers . . . and afterwards at Fayreholme Hall . . .'). My dear Essex grandmother was called Maud Marshall but, although she too was moon-faced, she was quite unknown to Tennyson, did not live in a Hall, and can therefore be ruled confidently out.

As a target for Dan Cupid's darts, with the subsequent emotions then freely expressed in partially comprehensible verse, the poet Burns is perhaps more to be pitied than censored. He can be helpful about names on occasion. There was, for example, the fascinating Mary Morrison who, when feeling in the mood, sat at her window dispensing smiles and cheering weary workers on their way home (which in Scottish comes out as 'hame' – anything to be different), a pleasing social amenity which they might try out at Leyland's on a 'no carburettor, no smile' basis. Miss Morrison, it seems, was mad keen on dancing (those jolly reels, I take it) and was the toast of the town, though the poet wisely suppresses the name of the town. Almost nothing sensible rhymes with Killiecrankie, Auchtermuchty or Spitalburn, and although Cossacks certainly rhymes, more or less, with Trossachs, the presence of wild Russian cavalry in the Highlands gives an unconvincing picture. Apart from our greatly revered and entirely pleasing poet laureate, poets have on the whole prudently avoided place names. There is nothing very poetically rewarding in the actual sound of East Grinstead or Bognor or Edgbaston.

But after that, I am afraid Robert Burns loses his love-sick head entirely and his poems are merely a proliferation of girls' names. There is Jean, described as being, of course, bonnie and residing apparently in West Scotland (one somehow pictures her in Ullapool). There is 'My Bonnie Mary' who lives within shouting distance of Leith pier and whose health is drunk in a wine-filled silver tassie, or cup. There is 'Bonnie Lesley' ('to see her is to love her') who has, we are told, gone 'o'er the Border', possibly to take up a post as a trainee *coiffeuse* in Carlisle. This short poem contains four 'bonnies', an adjective which rather goes to Burns's head. Then there is 'Highland Mary' who allowed herself to be clasped to the poet's bosom (his very words) before dying an early death from some unspecified illness, possibly a severe chill which went to her chest, most of the courting having been done in the open and beneath a hawthorn, never a wise act if the ground is damp. What a lesson for them both!

It is when we come to 'Auld Lang Syne' that maximum bewilderment sets in. It is not perhaps the moment to dwell here on the discomfiture of having, as occasion sometimes demands, to sing the thing with crossed arms (why?) and usually clutching by the hot hand at least one relatively unknown person. The disadvantage to which I here refer is that we haven't an idea to whom the poem is addressed. A childhood chum? Wee Tammy from the manse or braw Jock from the forge? Can it be yet another bonnie lassie (Elspeth from the Co-op)? The addressee appears to be male and the two of them have previously been running about the braes, picking daisies, paddling in burns and now, considerably older, are looking forward to drinking an intoxicant in what will undoubtedly be a public house. But in the last verse, the person addressed is referred to as 'my dear' and eyebrows rise. How acceptable was this phrase at that time? If it had been italicised as 'My *dear*!' we would have known where we were. I am not, frankly, too happy about that daisy picking, hardly a suitable occupation for a truly manly little chap.

Although the poet Longfellow can in some ways be faulted, he is quite splendid about names, and I don't only mean Minnehaha. Though he sometimes takes time off to write a poem about Seaweed or The Arsenal at Springfield or, I am afraid, Nuremberg, when personalities appear we are left in no doubt about who they are – Victor Galbraith (executed by firing squad in mysterious circumstances), Oliver Basselin (a poet based on Normandy), Sir Humphrey Gilbert (a sometimes inexpert navigator with a death-wish) and Gaspar Becerra (failed artist). Even the pop singer at Hiawatha's wedding gets a mention. It is Chibiabos (available for receptions, dances, wigwam parties, etc. Sole agent: Pau-Puk-Keewis. Has own canoe).

Roger Woddis

Last movement

'His role as Commander-in-Chief is that of a conductor whose orchestra would far rather be playing another tune.' – the Guardian *on Lord Soames, Governor of Rhodesia.*

The maestro ascends the platform,
  The baton is in his hand:
He looks at the score before him,
  And speaks to his yawning band:
'I think it's time for a change, lads,
  To something that's rarely heard:
Instead of the old "Eroica",
  Let's try Beethoven's Third.'

And nobody seems to notice,
  The two being one and the same,
That however you change the title,
  The music remains the same,
And much of the brass is strident,
  And most of the strings are flat,
But only pedantic listeners
  Are much exercised about that.

And the maestro continues directing
  The din that everyone hears,
But nothing gets through to His Lordship,
  Because of the plugs in his ears.
And the night shall be shrill with music,
  And the fiddles continue to play,
But the sound of a drum grows louder,
  And refuses to go away.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Edward W. Said

Tourism among the Dogs

Orwell: The Transformation by PETER STANSKY & WILLIAM ABRAHAMS *Constable* £6.95

This is a very stripped-down Orwell. Legally deprived of extensive quotation from his work, Peter Stansky and William Abrahams have nevertheless pressed on not only to finish a two-part biography they began in 1972 when *The Unknown Orwell* was published, but also to bring to an end their study of British writers in the Thirties who were involved in the Spanish Civil War. (*Journey to the Frontier*, 1966, was about John Cornford and Julian Bell.) Not that more facts, more analyses of his mind and work, would have prevented Orwell's provinciality, his narrow view of life, his cheerless reporting from coming through, as indeed those things come through here in this carefully admiring, small-scaled study.

The case *for* him could not be made better than Stansky and Abrahams make it, that is, with his stubborn professionalism and the 'natural' white style he perfected winning out in the hierarchy of virtues over his supposed political savvy or intellectual conscience. They make no attempt to hide Orwell's astonishingly apolitical awareness of his world – Gordon Comstock, the hero of *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, they remark, is 'only fitfully aware of the hundreds of thousands of unemployed . . .and he is equally indifferent to any sort of political solution to the evils of the money world from which he is in flight' – nor to pretend that as a novelist he is on a level with Kipling, much less a successor to Lawrence, Joyce, or Conrad. Their Orwell has his limits emphasised, and those are considerable.

After a surprisingly clumsy first paragraph that dances unconvincingly around the metamorphosis of Eric Blair into George Orwell, Stansky and Abrahams go on with great skill to depict the transformation in terms of an emerging, rather modest career, from *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) to Orwell's Spanish entrance and exit (1936-37), which produced *Homage to Catalonia* and his famous commitment to democratic socialism. He gives up teaching, gets married, writes reviews and essays, does a set of well-received books, travels to the northern mining country, wanders among down-and-outers, goes to Spain in search of raw experience, he and his wife acquire a modest house, he takes up again with old Etonian friends: those are the high spots of his life to 1937, patiently, even elegantly chronicled and shrewdly set forth by Stansky and Abrahams. Definitely not a heroic, and not quite an anti-heroic life. A few disheartening patterns emerge, however.

Orwell's sustained political writing career coincides not with his down-and-out years, nor with his brief interest in the concrete experience of imperialism (*Burmese Days*), but with his re-admission to and subsequent residence inside bourgeois life. Politics was something he observed, albeit as an honest partisan, from the comforts of bookselling, marriage, friendship with other writers (not by any means with the radicals used as material for *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Homage to Catalonia*, then dropped), dealing with publishers and literary agents. It is this milieu that nurtured, and always inhibited his politics. Despite it he has been given credit for a kind of overall political sanctity and cultural prescience. Out of it grew the later social patriotism which, as Raymond Williams has shown in his excellent little study of Orwell, blocked any serious political analysis of 'England Your England'. Even the homey terms that were

usually Orwell's preference over genuinely historical or theoretical explanation – 'England in a phrase: a family with the wrong people in control' – derive from this essentially humdrum background.

In other words, Orwell needed to surround himself with a familiar atmosphere that eliminated all worries before he could formulate a position; where but in the centre of a social setting that, minus children, restored all the ingredients of a nice family romance could his anxieties be calmed? In *Down and Out* he makes a revealing admission about the nature of the worry that plagued him. Once you hit absolute bottom, he says, there comes a sense that 'you have talked so often of going to the dogs – and well, here are the dogs, and you have reached them, and you can stand it. It takes off a lot of anxiety.' *Not standing it* – 'it' being the psycho-moral strain of falling apart completely, losing your identity as defined for you by where you come from and where most of the time you know (as Orwell certainly knew from membership in the lower-upper-middle class) you can return. Surely the removal of this last option causes the peculiar dread experienced by Winston Smith during his final ordeal in *1984*, the more so after having lost the cosy sanctuary he shared with Julia above Mr Charrington's shop. Just as surely, the off-stage presence of home and the possibility of a phone call for money to Eric Blair's Aunt Nellie constitute the narrator's bad faith when he was a *plongeur* in Paris or a tramp in England.

In *The Unknown Orwell* Stansky and Abrahams speak of Orwell's having successfully blocked 'from his consciousness the invented or synthetic character of the [down and out] experience', yet they are too perspicacious to deny that his true reality anchored, gave privileged strength to his tourism among the dogs. Compare Genet with Orwell and the point is not even arguable. Thus when Orwell became an overtly political writer in the middle Thirties the risks of politics were handled from the perspective of someone who very definitely felt, and really was, at home *somewhere*. Hence the peculiar force of Stansky and Abrahams's tautology, 'Orwell belonged to the category of writers who write.' And could afford to write, they might have added. In contrast they speak of George Garrett, whom Orwell met in Liverpool, a gifted writer, seaman, dockworker, Communist militant, 'the plain facts of [whose] situation – on the dole, married and with kids, the family crowded into two rooms – made it impossible for him to attempt any extended piece of writing.'

Orwell's writing life then was from the start an affirmation of unexamined bourgeois values. There is nothing the matter with that, but it was always being overshadowed and hidden by the adventurous content of Orwell's material, which had the effect of persuading his readers that he spoke as one of the oppressed. True, he had courage and humanity but, we must now say, he also had security and protection. Stansky and Abrahams make it possible to see Orwell's political excursions as tours in the garden, not as travels abroad, nor as the harrowing exposures to real politics for which he has been celebrated. And the famous style emerges in this excellent picture as a technical achievement, not the result of political trial by fire.

His style's human and political costs, in what he cut away or refused ever to confront, are troubling to think about, though. Stansky and Abrahams give evidence simultaneously of Orwell's retrospective doctoring of his past, and of his downright foolishness about the contemporary scene. What Orwell said when he wrote for Ukrainian readers of *Animal Farm* about his alleged commitment to socialism in 1930 is plainly an untruth, made the more reprehensible not only because Stansky and Abrahams show that he had no notion of socialism until much later, but also because we catch him unaware in 1935 'that Hitler intended to carry out the programme of *Mein Kampf*'. Far from having earned the right to denounce socialism *from within* Orwell had no knowledge either of Marx or of the massive Marxist and socialist traditions; moreover he consistently referred to English radicals as 'the pansy Left', and seemed totally uninterested in any social or economic analysis that was neither journalistic (like his) nor anti-Marxist. When he was not verbally abus-

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ing people he considered opponents or competitors, he was holing up as a reviewer of more or less unchallenging books. Stansky and Abrahams thus provide an earlier complement for Isaac Deutscher's damaging account of the later Orwell, his insularity being a turn from cosmopolitan or radical modernism to an ideology of the middle-brow 'our way of life' variety, which in the US at least has been dressed up as 'neo-conservatism'.

Nor is this all. Stansky and Abrahams state, more alas than they demonstrate, that in his happy marriage to Eileen O'Shaughnessy Orwell was less defensive and barbed in his attitudes than before. Yet apart from the dubious idyll enacted in The Stores, Wallington, what do Stansky and Abrahams really let us see? Eileen cooking the whole day, Eileen typing manuscripts, Eileen there to provide Orwell with support in Spain. The result for her (again Stansky and Abrahams are coolly devastating) was the sheer fatigue that caused her death. Most relationships seem to have made considerably fewer demands on Orwell than on his friends.

What then is the *literary* history narrated in *Orwell: The Transformation*? Surely the consolidation of Orwell's plain style as it reported without unnecessary adornment the views of a decent man. Many good things have justifiably been said about this style, although it is curious how they have often tended to prevent other things from also being said. For instance, the plain reportorial style coerces history, process, knowledge itself into mere events being observed. Out of this style has grown the eye-witness, seemingly opinion-less politics – along with its strength and weakness – of contemporary Western journalism. When they are on the rampage, you show Asiatic and African mobs rampaging: an obviously disturbing scene presented by an obviously concerned reporter who is beyond Left piety or right-wing cant. But are such events events only when they are shown through the eyes of the decent reporter? Must we inevitably forget the complex reality that produced the event just so that we can experience concern at mob violence? Is there to be no remarking of the power that put the reporter or analyst there in the first place and made it possible to represent the world as a function of comfortable concern? Is it not intrinsically the case that such a style is far more insidiously unfair, so much more subtly dissembling of its affiliations with power, than any avowedly political rhetoric? And more ironically still, aren't its obsessive fantasies about indoctrination and propaganda likely to promote exactly that 'value-free' technocracy against which one might expect plainness and truth to protest? That such questions arise out of an account of Orwell only until 1937 fairly suggests the skill with which Stansky and Abrahams have done it.

Jonathan Mirsky

Dissecting a Sparrow

Mass Movement in a Chinese Village: Ten Mile Inn by ISABEL & DAVID CROOK *Routledge* £6.95

Inside Peking: A Personal Report by BEVERLEY HOOPER *Macdonald & Jane's* £6.95

For Mao by PHILIP CORRIGAN, HARVIE RAMSAY & DEREK SAYER *Macmillan* £12

Broken Images: Essays on Chinese Culture & Politics by SIMON LEYS *Allison & Busby* £6.95 & £3.50

The China Difference edited by Ross Terrill *Harper & Row* £5.95

A revolution began in the Chinese countryside in the areas under Communist control even before the Japanese invasion in the Thirties. Most Chinese have always lived on the land, and if one grasps what happened there under the Party, then Maoism becomes more than a mania which gobbled up its enemies during the Cultural Revolution. It, Maoism, a movement – not Mao 'the Genius', 'Helmsman', 'Great Teacher', 'Red, Red Sun in Our Hearts' – transformed the lives of peasants, forever.

There are many books about China, but the best half-dozen focus on the peasant revolution: Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China,* Jack Belden's *China Shakes the World,* William Hinton's *Fan Shen,* and the three studies by Isabel and David Crook, of which *Mass Movement in a Chinese Village: Ten Mile Inn* is the latest.

The Crooks have done anthropological field work and taught English in China for decades. During a terrible spasm in the Cultural Revolution they were isolated or under arrest for five years. Zhou En-lai said later he was sorry, and the Crooks have hardly complained.

Their books concentrate on small communities. Ten Mile Inn, 275 miles south-west of Peking, underwent famine, Japanese oppression, and Communist revolution. 291 pages about one seven-week chapter of land reform may seem like overkill. The Crooks, in their lapidary prose, evaporate such suspicion on the first page:

> The Chinese speak of 'dissecting a sparrow' – making a careful and thorough examination of a particular situation in order to discover the general processes at work. This is what we sought to do in one Chinese village – Ten Mile Inn. Though unique in many ways, it also served us as a microscope for what was taking place in countless villages throughout the liberated areas.

Masterfully composed photographs make their work doubly significant. Close-ups of peasants and cadres caught at critical moments, the pictures were taken during the 'seven-week Adjustment Campaign as we saw it with our own eyes'.

The 1949 Liberation was more than two years away when, in September 1947, the Communist Party drafted an agrarian law to bring about the thorough reform of the feudal land system. Although Ten Mile Inn had been under Communist influence since the early Forties, reform remained incomplete and the poorest peasants complained that immemorial injustices continued. Ten Mile Inn was poor. In 1937, before the Communists, there were 1,400 inhabitants most of whom owned 'not even one hair of a donkey'. The Crooks interviewed villagers about their terrible past. 'For most of the year they subsisted on husks, wild herbs, and watery gruel "so thin you could see the reflection of the moon in it".' Everyone, by Western standards was poor, but only the peasants died of hunger. 'The Communists,' the Crooks say 'did not introduce class struggle; they made the peasants conscious of it.'

During the 1948 Adjustment village traditions still ran deep. Many men were still too poor to find wives. There was a woman shortage. 'Many new middle peasant bachelors were . . . unable to find wives in a society that had long practised female infanticide.'

Life after death glinted through even at moments of revolutionary climax like the division of clothes seized from the landlord.

> A woman of 70 hobbled over to a pile of silk to look for a shroud in some suitable dark colour . . . she wanted material that was thin and lightweight, so that it would not hamper her movements when she became a spirit. Garments trimmed with even the smallest piece of fur were out of the question, for to wear one would mean risking reincarnation as an animal.

Many of the characteristics of post-1949 campaigns are foreshadowed in Ten Mile Inn's Adjustment period. Landlords and rich peasants had already been cast down. But the poor expected more land and goods yet. A 'poor peasant line' developed (unapproved by the Party) which so alarmed the slightly better-off that 'they began to wear their oldest clothes and took care never to be seen eating wheat flour instead of the coarser millet or maize'. Some stopped fertilising their fields 'fearing it [the fertiliser] might be taken away from them and given to the poor'. Such frantic egalitarianism became a feature of the Cultural Revolution, producing a uniform outer drabness.

Then there was the fear of violence directed against Party cadres, a recurring phenomenon of the Revolution. Twenty-eight of the villagers were Communists. 'All but seven of them had been working underground; their own families did not know they were Communists.' One of the Work Team, the Party members sent in from outside, spoke to the peasants: 'There must be no quarrelling or fighting. The Party members must not be maltreated and beaten as some landlords were in the past.' This fear, based on awareness that they were a minority, led the Party cadres to term much serious criticism of themselves 'factionalism', a rationalisation which exists today.

Cadres tended to be domineering at first, but this gave way swiftly to guilt and despair. One cadre told the Crooks:

> In fact by the fifth day [of the Adjustment] some of them were taking it so hard they were beginning to crack . . . Wang Xitang suddenly said, 'Before we leave here tonight we'd better take away everyone's weapons.' He was afraid some of them might attempt suicide . . .

During the classification of 'poor' and 'middle exploiters', and 'exploited', certain 'struggle objects' were identified, literally, by patches sewn on their jackets. Some of these 'objects' turned out to be so dreadful it is a marvel they escaped lynching: seducers, killers, informers, extortionists – sometimes wrapped up in a single man who would begin his confession with a few peccadillos and end

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up days later with something bloodcurdling.

Another augury of future national campaigns was the weight placed on public humiliation of the guilty, shame, and ultimate reacceptance. (There were also quite a few innocent victims, whose rehabilitation sometimes took months.) A guilty but redeemed 'object' said, 'I was isolated . . . I began to realize I had been a criminal. I thought: "This is the end of everything." But now I find the people of Ten Mile Inn still want me.'

Women remained in the background as they still do. None was elected to important committees and in the photographs they sit together, alertly listening and watching, always with 'women's work' in their hands. When they did achieve some political status it was according to their traditional virtues of gentleness, obedience and industriousness, still sought after in China today, where a woman frequently gets to the top because she is someone's wife. In Ten Mile Inn 'even the most politically aware men still had not overcome their feeling of superiority to women'.

Always, behind everything, lurked poverty which could extinguish whole families. During the Classification campaign to search out 'bad' backgrounds, one peasant commented:

> Of course tracing back three generations was all wrong because few families had been poor for that long at a stretch. If a man's parents are poor, he usually can't afford to marry and have children.

When land remeasurement began, and it turned out that the measuring instrument was off by *one fifth of an inch,* panic spread through the village. Not only was measurement of the land closely related to taxes, but in the old days it had been one of the methods by which the landlords and rich peasants cheated the masses.

Six weeks after the Adjustment Campaign ended, the work team returned to check on progress. Little post-adjustment bliss was evident. Cadres and committee members (Party and non-Party) alike, were all so supersensitive to public opinion, so afraid of being branded as authoritarian, that they were surrendering their leadership. A diviner had resurfaced and was plying her trade. The cadres were at odds about how to deal with her. A peasant cut through the dithering about 'feudal influences':

> We can collect some scorpions . . . and put them inside her pants. Then if she doesn't wriggle her rump, we'll know she really has some power.

Beverly Hooper's *Inside Peking* recounts an Australian student's 16 months in Peking, a period embracing the death of Mao and the smashing of the Gang of Four. Like the Crooks, Hooper is an acute observer. She tells us about everything in the university: food, manners, fashions and habits. Chinese students struck her as sleepy and easily exhausted. As foreigners eventually do in China, she found a wall dividing her from most Chinese. 'I want to get to know the people', was a common if naïve expression heard among recently-arrived students. Before long the people – in Peking over 8,000,000 of them – were reduced chiefly to the Chinese students and teachers at the Institute.

The women students closest to Hooper lived in a female 'subculture' . . . with their own sex, watching television, visiting the local shopping centre . . . Lin Mei and her girlfriends had few interests apart from the traditional ones of sewing, knitting, and clothes. They were, she observed, 'like playful puppydogs or young adolescents. It was hard to realize that their ages ranged up to about twenty-four'.

More seriously, these young women were politically unimpressive during a time, the late Cultural Revolution, of enormous political activity. Like the majority of Chinese students Lin Mei was a mouthpiece of the current political line. When Hooper asked a roommate how she knew what to write on her posters attacking Deng Xiaoping, the young woman replied: 'Our teacher tells us, of course.' When that campaign ended a few months later, another student hesitatingly admitted: 'It seems that the last 10 years since the Cultural Revolution might have been wasted in China.'

Even such a 'seems' leaves no imprint on Corrigan, Ramsay, and Sayer's *For Mao.* Bafflingly composed, using some sort of code in which Macmillan needn't have colluded, and employing hagiographic jargon, it opens like this:

> This work is explained by its title. *For Mao*: on behalf of Mao; an intervention – given the circumstances, in fact, *a presentation* – of Mao against alternative positions.

It is, they correctly state, 'a work of theory. It is not a history . . . we have chosen a presentational account of Mao's Marxism.' Their 'presentation', lacking the grit and texture provided by the Crooks, Hooper, or indeed, many historians, floats freely in a devout nimbus.

This is a pity, really, because at the core their work, when not maddeningly opaque, is perceptive. Mao, they argue, recognised that the central problem of socialist construction was to sustain the activity of 'revolutionizing selves and things'. This, of course, is what the Crooks' study *reveals. For Mao* obscures it.

The authors should have known better than to write certain paragraphs. During the upheavals of the late Fifties and Sixties, they assert, 'the predominant stance of Mao himself . . . was against false exorcism through persecution of individuals . . .' One would like to see a gloss on this by Peng Dehuai, Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, and Deng Xiaoping, not to mention the regiment of purged intellectuals who, starting in 1942, got up the Helmsman's nose.

Simon Leys is not an antidote, although in these essays, as in his previous *The Chairman's New Clothes* and *Chinese Shadows*, he fancies himself as a dart-tosser. Sometimes he is very good at it. He praises Mao for leading a great revolution but knows enough Chinese to make fun of his calligraphy and poetry. But the trouble with Leys is two-fold: he writes as if the last 15 years of Chinese history have been an affront to *him* and are *therefore* bad, which is silly. What is not silly, and what Leys cannot get his mind around, is that a tremendous revolution shook China at least as impressively as the Industrial Revolution shook Britain, and in one tenth of the time. Leys would be a more telling critic if he would stop sniggering.

The repellently titled *The China Difference*, edited by Ross Terrill, is a collection of specially written essays by some of America's leading China specialists. Subjects include factory work, the law, human rights, arts and literature, and how politics work. Some of the authors appear self-immunised against even Chinese judgments on their recent experience. Orville Schell, for instance, spent some months in China in 1975. 'Propaganda', he assures us, 'does not have sinister connotations. It is a word that evokes the notion of teaching and learning.' Few Chinese in 1979 would accept such a characterisation of the avalanche of words and images which buried them when Mao's wife and her colleagues got their hands on the cultural levers.

Nor would the hundreds of thousands of students now competing to enter universities partly to evade 'labour', or their older comrades begging to be brought home from the land, agree with Erica Jen, a student in Peking in 1972, that many young people 'now feel they must go to the countryside because it is there that they can best appreciate the importance and difficulty of political struggle'. Like the authors of *For Mao,* Jen must have kept her fingers firmly in her ears since 1976 to miss the chorus of post-Gang revelations.

Maoism, we learn from this heap of new books, takes many forms and affects Chinese and China-watchers variously. Ultimately it was aimed at the peasants and for at least 20 years it heaved them towards standing position. A Work Team member spoke to the Ten Mile Inn villagers: 'It is not the cadres you should thank for the land, but Chairman Mao.' But one 'genius' couldn't have done it. The cadres were indeed authoritarian, manipulative, sexist, terrified, and guilt-ridden. But, as the Crooks make clear: 'Individually and collectively, the Communists of Ten Mile Inn had shown themselves to be the most selfless, courageous, and resourceful men in the village.'

Robert Taylor

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Norman H. C. Smith

The Ruined Prince

This, then, was the situation:
The rains had almost ended;
A few clouds drifted about like fish,
But the sky was otherwise – well – bluish.
The sun, that had once boomed out
all night,
Now couldn't even warm itself.

Three men with bayonets stood at the gate.
There were a few trees, but no shade to
speak of.
The plain ran on to the edge of a
wood where
Wild bulls grazed on crocuses, and
Nymphs played bridge in their knickers.

None of this really bothered him.
Trapped in a tower without windows
And a broken door that faced north,
He wrote his messages to armies
That had long since gone home;
Anagrams, epitaphs to dead certainties –
It didn't much matter what.

They brought him tea at four,
And delicious meals –
Young ostriches simmered in wine,
His favourite guzzle –
Yet when he asked how he was,
And if his toothache had stopped,
They wouldn't answer him,
But whistled and picked their noses.

Among this week's contributors:

EDWARD W. SAID is Professor of English at Columbia University and the author of *Orientalism* and, forthcoming, *The Question of Palestine*.

JONATHAN MIRSKY is a historian who writes frequently on Chinese affairs.

J. L. GILI has translated Lorca's poetry and also poetry from Catalan. He is currently engaged in the publication of Lorca manuscripts.

A. S. BYATT teaches English at University College, London. Her most recent book, *The Virgin in the Garden*, the first in a sequence of four novels, was published in 1978.

HELEN MCNEIL teaches in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

JULIAN BARNES's first novel, *Metroland*, will be published by Cape this spring.

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH is Head of Education at the British Film Institute.

Just out:
The MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP's new Report No 8:
'INEQUALITIES IN ZIMBABWE'
by Christopher Hitchens
price 75p (plus 25p p&p) from:
MRG, 36 Craven St., London WC2, or good bookshops.

A.S. Byatt

The Price of Knowledge

Decadence: the Strange Life of an Epithet by RICHARD GILMAN *Secker* £5.95
The Veil and the Mask: Essays on Culture and Ideology by J.G. MERQUIOR *Routledge* £6.95
Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist by ERNST KRIS & OTTO KURZ *Yale* £10.80
Words and Things by ERNEST GELLNER *Routledge* £7.95 & £4.50

All these books might find themselves legitimately on the booklist of a degree course in communications studies or cultural studies, although their styles, and the intellectual disciplines behind them, vary widely. Richard Gilman's *Decadence* is an elegant and sceptical study of the history of the epithet 'decadent' and the more dubious social and aesthetic phenomena associated with it. J.G. Merquior is a Brazilian who is both sociologist and aesthetician: he has written on the aesthetics of Lévi-Strauss, whose seminar he attended for five years. *The Veil and the Mask* is a densely theoretical study of the relationship between 'culture', 'ideology' and 'legitimacy', drawing on sociology, anthropology and philosophy for its terms and topics.

Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz first published their book in 1934. Kris, the psychoanalytic theorist and Kurz, historian and art historian, collected anecdotes about lives of artists from ancient Greece to comparatively modern times, showing that certain incidents, true or fictitious, recur in lives centuries or civilisations apart. They call their book 'a preliminary work for a future sociology of the artist'. *Words and Things*, Gellner's famous, or notorious, attack on what he saw as the intellectual poverty of the linguistic philosophy derived from Wittgenstein, was first published in 1959 and refused a review in 'Mind'.

Gellner has an elegant preface by Bertrand Russell. Kris and Kurz have an elegant preface by Gombrich. Merquior has an illuminating and helpful preface by Gellner, with many of whose ideas about cognition, sociology and anthropology, and the nature of belief he is clearly in sympathy. Any review of these books will be, as Dr Johnson said of metaphysical verse, 'heterogeneous ideas yoked by violence together'. But after spending some time studying proposed syllabuses in cultural studies, and some more acquainting myself with Ernest Gellner's views about how it is possible today for us to think complex thoughts about ourselves and our world, I am ready to believe that heterogeneous violence is both inevitable, necessary, and liberating.

Gellner in his preface to Merquior's book writes 'it is part of our culture (in the Anthropological sense) that no man of culture (evaluative sense) is free of the sense of the precariousness of his own identity, or the fragility of political and social arrangements which surround him'. Merquior himself, engaged in the 'micro-sociology', or anthropology, of complex societies, is interested in the partial and shifting nature of the relationships between ideology and the culture which both allows the ideology to form and provides the means for its criticism or modification. He sees ideology not, as he says Durkheim once saw the sacral practices and beliefs of a society, as a necessary, believed, cohesive image produced by that society, but as the expression of the interests of a section or class of any group, which, to a certain extent has imposed itself on other sections or classes – and which is and should be open to intellectual examination. The 'veil' and 'mask' of his title metaphor refer to the workings of any ideology on people whose interests the ideology does and doesn't represent. The 'veil' prevents the 'normal class-bearer or conveyor' of an ideology from seeing clearly what social reality his ideas distort. The 'mask' is the same ideals seen by an external observer this time not as delusion but as purposive weapons, deliberately imaged, in a social power-game. Either way, suspicion and analysis are possible, appropriate responses. And scepticism about culture becomes part of the normal equipment of thinking man.

Gellner, Merquior, and in a quite different way Richard Gilman, give detailed and intelligent analyses of cultural shifts and possible masks and veils of which we should be aware. I want to concentrate on two aspects: language and history. Richard Gilman describes his work as the history of an epithet: he begins, more or less, by pointing out that 'Decadence is a *name*, and in regard to the relations between names and things we are still in a realm of pre-science.' He goes on to say that 'decadent' has had a life 'in three realms at least, the political, the cultural, and the moral, with an ascending degree of murk and inappropriateness': he will try, he says, necessarily inexactly, to give a history of its usage, but expresses the usual contemporary humanist alarm that he is talking only about *language*. 'History is as much the record of language as of anything else. It may even be, in some terrifying but also perhaps liberating sense, *only* the record of language.' This dubiety is now almost obligatory for literary thinkers, and Messrs Gellner and Merquior, anxious to preserve for us a conceptual language with which to attempt to describe ourselves and our worlds and not only a language, could, I think, explain it.

Merquior has an interesting passage on Gellner's view that 'the culture of the word' is passing: Gellner, he says, surmises that we 'the inhabitants of an incipient "pragmatic rather than absolutist, technical rather than adaptive, mathematical rather than verbal" civilisation, are entering a period characterised by the instability of "belief culture".' Gellner himself, in a paper collected in *The Devil in Modern Philosophy* argues convincingly that the humanist with verbal and aesthetic skills, once the guardian of truth, the cognitive expert, the literate man, has been deprived of his 'full intellectual status' by the development of science, of non-linguistic thought as a source of *knowledge* (Gellner's final legitimiser). The 'two cultures' debate didn't adequately take in this. Some of the writers discussed by Richard Gilman did. He

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has a good section on the intellectual descent of Baudelaire and Huysmans from Sade and Stendhal, in which art, and as it were – in Merquior's terms – an occult, aristocratic sectional ideology of the affective life, the inner life, art as value, even 'sin' as recognition that traditional morality had powerful forces behind it, are used as veil or mask to hold off the values and language of machinery, materialism, utilitarianism and science.

It is the humanist intellectual aware of the threat to his expertise, on the defensive. Though Gilman also quotes the editor of *Le Décadent,* Anatole Baju, in 1888, praising the new decadent 'precursors of the future' for simplicity, clarity, mastery of the senses, serenity, and 'the virtue of a stoic'. Or again, there is the prophetic voice of Nietzsche, convinced that civilisation went wrong at an early date, that the great Greek philosophers represent the beginning of 'decadence', that the 'female' ideologies of piety, pity, love, are 'decadent', as are 'thought as opposed to emotion, generalisations as opposed to specificities': these Gilman calls 'Nietzsche's violent decisions about what constitutes health or illness, vigour or debility, in individuals and societies'.

These observations lead one to think carefully about the way in which we think about the *history* of a culture, a civilisation, or a word. Mr Gilman shows how the word decadence is reified, as though it were an observable organic process. He goes on to show how early societies thought of themselves anthropomorphically, either as 'old' civilisations, and therefore decaying, or as 'new' ones, and therefore fresh and vigorous. In fact, as he points out, these analogies are not very useful: most societies are both at once, and the myth of the decay of Imperial Rome has a literary history but not much factual support for it. Disease and external violence seem more to blame than internal laxity, political or sexual. And late Roman art is not *worse*, he says, than the classical: it is either imitative or different, and to equate 'imitative' with 'decadent' is to fuddle our concepts.

J.G. Merquior is very helpful, despite some obfuscating language, with the history of culture. He points out that classical and Renaissance Europe tended to mean by 'culture' what the French call 'civilisation' – a value system purveyed by education, literacy, moral thought. It was the German Romantics, especially those interested in history, who prepared the way for classical anthropological views of 'cultures' – more than one, idiosyncratic, seen as organisms with their own laws of organisation, growth, and vitality. *Historismus* was 'neutral and pluralistic' not 'evaluative and universalistic'. Culture became a plural noun. Historians like von Ranke and von Riehl with their 'natural histories' of local cultures were the ancestors of anthropologists, and thence derives the classical anthropologists' vision of 'ethnocentricity' – seeing other cultures through one's own cultural eyes – as a cardinal sin. Merquior sees Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, rather as Gellner sees Chomsky's 'deep structure' of grammar, as a way to think neither as though we were all purely *products* of society (cultural holism), nor as though we were all monads who could not make meaningful statements to each other. It is interesting in this context that Kris and Kurz have no troubles either with cultural holism or cultural pluralism: their biographical anecdotes about artists came from ancient Greece, early China, mediaeval Italy indiscriminately, but produce the same recurrent problems.

These problems – the artist as joker (especially sexual), the artist as imitator of nature, the artist as rival of a creator-god, the artist as privileged breaker of cultural codes – raise the final problem that needs to be discussed in terms of all these interrelating methodologies and beliefs. What about the individual? Gilman sees 'decadent' attitudes and poses – Oscar Wilde's mask or persona – as individual defiance of cultural pressures to conform, and the whole concept of 'decadence' as hazily opposed to the 19th-century confident concept of evolution and progress.

Merquior is concerned to leave space for the enquiring mind to look at our 'oversocialised concept of culture'. He mentions Irving Goffman's study of *conscious* rôle-playing and deviance (not far from Gilman's Wilde). He appeals to Kant, who placed the paradox of the 'unsocial sociability' of man, who needed both to belong to the group and differentiate himself from it. He also, like Lionel Trilling, points out that Freud saw things 'beyond culture'. 'Freud never legitimised culture altogether, not even as the self-preserving force repressing man's destructive impulses.' Here again, Baudelaire's and Huysmans's interest in the obscene and the satanic seem to be related to the stubborn individual refusal to be wholly socialised.

One ends with a great respect for Gellner's ambitious rationality. In *Words and Things* he wants neither the hazy mysticism, nor the comfortable 'ordinary language' of the followers of Wittgenstein – the abstraction Iris Murdoch called Ordinary Language Man. In a small world where cultures are plural and language has dubious authority this seems to him a retreat from what we must try to understand. At the end of *The Legitimation of Belief* (1975) he offers us four intellectual planks in our cultural shipwreck. They are (a) the empiricist insistence that 'faiths must not fill the world but must stand ready to be judged by evidence not under their control.' (Related to Popper's principle of falsifiability.) (b) a mechanistic insistence on impersonal, structural explanations. *In our time*, he says, we have to think this way – 'the price of real knowledge is that our identities, freedom, norms are no longer underwritten by our vision and comprehension of things. On the contrary, we are doomed to suffer a tension between cognition and identity.'

This is the loss of the 'warm, inner life' of the humanist, which, he continually assures us is gone. However, we have, or can use, plank (c) 'ironic cultural nationalism' – styles we choose, like the Baudelairean dandy in a way no longer full of conviction or belief, but tentative and truly optional.

And we can have, lastly, what he calls 'truncated evolutionism' – an obligation to think about how our society came about, our language, our ideas, without therefore, like the great nineteenth-century believers in progess and development, supposing the same laws obtain in all times and places for all men.

One of the most frightening things about what I have seen of contemporary teaching of cultural and communications studies is a tendency to hold absolute beliefs about how everybody else holds wrong beliefs.

Merquior criticises Althusser's structural Marxism, and some 'semiotic' anthropology for being 'oversocialised' and holistic: rigid ideology about ideology. If Gilman's book is an elegant exemplum of the dangers of facile reification of concepts in the arts, Merquior's is a knotty and baffling, but necessary exemplum of sceptical, partial, theoretical thinking about social science. I believe, with Gellner, that some of the warm inner life of the authoritative humanist is no longer available to us: it is therefore very important to hold to the limited freedoms of scepticism, empiricism, intellectual curiosity. 'I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's,' said Blake, who despised empirical philosophy and appeals to Reason. There are other ways, less dangerous, out of the traps and temptations of the system-builders.

J. L. Gili

Lifted Blinds

The Assassination of Federico García Lorca by IAN GIBSON *W. H. Allen* £7.95

However overwhelmed one has been in recent years by stories of atrocities and human degradation, one still feels awed at the inhuman acts committed during the first months of the Spanish Civil War. In this compelling and well-documented book, Ian Gibson has focused his interest on one particular area of those troubled days: Granada and the surrounding countryside, and on one particular person: Lorca, perhaps the most lamented victim of the Civil War, and certainly the greatest loss to Spanish and European letters.

With painstaking research the author has pieced together the puzzle that for many years has baffled previous researchers, namely how Lorca was killed and by whom, and where he was buried. This line of investigation was first started by Gerald Brenan in the masterly narrative of his search for the poet's tomb which appeared in *The Face of Spain* (1950).

CUBA'S QUEST

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Bruce Kenrick

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Brenan's inference that the poet had been buried in a ditch, after having been shot together with a group of other victims in the vicinity of the village of Viznar, on the hillside overlooking the fertile plain of Granada, was substantially correct. Ian Gibson now conclusively confirms what happened there.

The first edition of Ian Gibson's book appeared in Spanish (1971), then in English (1973). Although banned in Spain, copies of the Spanish edition filtered through in sufficient numbers to bring forth an abundant correspondence volunteering new information or offering suggestive clues for further research. These the author followed after Franco's death with further visits to Granada and further interviews with key figures in that sorry drama. The information gathered now in a climate of freedom was substantial. In consequence the publishers asked the author to revise and re-write his book and give his complete and final reassessment.

The preliminary chapters have not been changed. These include a short biographical account of Lorca, and a narrative of the political situation in Spain in the years preceding the Civil War. In the succeeding chapters the changes become evident and are crucial to the final conclusions which the author has arrived at with skill, supported by unimpeachable documentation. Most of the pictures of the first edition have been reproduced again, but the sickening picture of the bone pit in the cemetery of Granada has rightly been left out, since the burial place is elsewhere.

Ian Gibson's research explodes various myths surrounding the figure of Lorca, that he was murdered by persons unknown or as a result of a personal vendetta. This book proves without doubt that the assassination was carried out on the orders of the Civil Governor of Granada with the involvement of various political parties of the right. Another myth originated from the theory advanced by Jean-Louis Schonberg that the murder committed had been a homosexual *crime passionnel*, a version that officialdom in Spain welcomed, since it exonerated the Nationalists of the hideous crime. Gibson demolishes this with some contempt and not much difficulty.

Another prevalent Lorquian myth was the one that presented Lorca as a completely apolitical figure. The number of documents adduced by the author leaves no doubt as to Lorca's political position, which was to the left (a rather liberal left), on the side of social justice, and against fascism and oppression. This is not to say that he was what we call today a 'committed' poet. His work was not political as was that of a Pablo Neruda, but in his life he never betrayed his sentiments nor flinched from his beliefs. And because of this his life ended tragically. In the savage days of the Nationalist repression a person with liberal sympathies, even though not a communist or a socialist or a freemason, was automatically labelled 'red' and could expect little mercy – as Ian Gibson puts it – 'from the self-appointed guardians of the Faith who were now devoting themselves to ferreting out and destroying all those whom they accused of being "dangerous agitators".' He was also much disliked by the Church. Once Lorca was labelled 'red' he was as good as dead.

Lorca once said that in every country death has finality: 'It arrives and the blinds are drawn. Not in Spain, In Spain they are lifted ... A dead person in Spain is more alive when dead than is the case anywhere else.'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Andrew Clements

Senior Citizen

Lindsay Quartet *Elizabeth Hall, Radio 3*
English Chamber Orchestra *Elizabeth Hall*
Michael Tippett: An Introductory Study by DAVID MATTHEWS *Faber* £5.95
Tippett and his Operas by ERIC WALTER-WHITE *Barrie & Jenkins* £7.95

Stock is taken, evaluation sought at 75; a composer who reaches his fourth quarter century still at the height of his creative powers offers ample scope to his commentators. Since Tippett last passed a landmark, his popularity and stature have both grown enormously. At 70, his birthday was chiefly celebrated by a band of devotees; the latest junketings constitute a musical event of national importance, an opportunity to salute the greatest and most popular of living British composers. World music has few venerable figures these days. The stage is held by a younger generation which owes no allegiance to Carter, Messiaen or Tippett, the only composers to have claims as elder statesmen.

Yet Tippett is in so many ways an unlikely figure for such celebrity. He is not a musician who relates very securely to any thoroughgoing tradition, and his work does not exhibit qualities that seem at first 'international'. It's impossible at present to divorce his development from that of Benjamin Britten, not because of similarities of style or background, nor because Britten's death in 1976 left his position in English music unchallenged, but for more complex reasons of public awareness. Despite his seniority, Tippett's career developed in parallel to that of the more precocious Britten. Britten's sudden success in the immediate post-war period gained the support of the wider public and gave respectability to a new generation; Tippett was then able to establish his own trajectory unencumbered by the demands of widespread acceptance. Without the triumph of *Peter Grimes*, it's unlikely that *The Midsummer Marriage*'s extraordinary blend of Jungian mysticism, Eliotic cross-reference and boundless lyricism would have reached Covent Garden, let alone been given the chance to show itself as a masterpiece and the watershed in Tippett's progress. An accessible masterpiece thus established the public trust required to accept something far more elusive and ultimately, perhaps, more rewarding. Unlike Britten, however, Tippett has never regarded himself as an 'opera composer', but as a composer whose inspirations sometimes require theatrical conceit for their complete realisation. He has written four operas, but also four symphonies, four string quartets and now four concertos: the exploration of each medium has been thoroughly individual and quite unpredictable. He remains the least classifying and least classifiable of 20th-century British composers.

Until the première of the Fourth String Quartet, which I reviewed here in detail last May, Tippett's most recent music had been disappointing to those who hoped he would build further upon the richness of detail and incident that made *The Knot Garden* and the Third Symphony so involving. *The Ice Break*, first produced at Covent Garden in 1977, attempts a parable of contemporary urban life which succeeds only partially in reconciling its tribal concerns – black/white, West/East, 'pop' culture/the western humanist tradition – with its exploration of individual characters. The Fourth Symphony (1977) grafts the flesh of a symphonic argument on to the skeleton of a Straussian programmatic poem to provide the most accessible of Tippett's orchestral works, somewhat at the expense of its intellectual grip. The Fourth Quartet, however, reaffirms one's faith. It is a beautifully shaped,

generous-spirited piece of astonishingly well-focused expressive force and scale of gesture, while at the same time a continuation of the explorations of the medium begun in the first three quartets of 30 years before, and a scaling down of the preoccupations of his more recent music. On Tippett's birthday itself (2 January), the Lindsay Quartet introduced the Fourth Quartet to London in a programme coupling it with Beethoven's A minor Quartet Op. 132, which they repeated and broadcast last Friday from Birmingham. Inevitably the performance seemed more assured than that of the première, the beauty of textures now more effortlessly projected.

Celebrations are promised throughout the year. The BBC plans to broadcast his entire output; his second opera, *King Priam*, is at last to be recorded. A new concerto, for violin, viola and cello, will be heard in the autumn – a final clearing of the decks before Tippett begins work on an evening-long choral work. But a curious sidelight on Tippett's development in the early Sixties was given its first public performance in the English Chamber Orchestra celebratory concert

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conducted by Norman Del Mar last Wednesday.

Words for Music Perhaps was the result of a BBC commission in 1959 to provide a sequence of poems and music on W. B. Yeats. The selections of verse were made by Anthony Thwaite from the cycles *Words for Music Perhaps* and *A Woman Young and Old*; sometimes complete poems and dialogues from the 'Crazy Jane' sequence, sometimes isolated stanzas. All of the poems are to be spoken, preferably by three voices (two female, one male), though only one – Michael Hordern – was used last Wednesday. Only rarely do text and music overlap; in the event the musical contribution is rather slight. The piece was composed while Tippett was at work on *King Priam* and the miniature interludes are essentially chippings from the same block: dry chords underpinned with piano and xylophone, spare two-part inventions for bass clarinet and cello, spiky solos for violin or trumpet. Even a repeat performance later in the ECO concert failed to reveal much of lasting interest, or surprisingly, a very perceptive response to the poetry.

After no worthwhile contribution to Tippett studies since the mid-Sixties, this year we are also promised at least four books. A collection of Tippett's notebooks and recent essays is yet to come, together with a comprehensive survey of his music. But the present publications do something to fill the gap. David Matthews's elegant little essay, which does not attempt more than to bring Tippett's achievement to a wider audience, succeeds splendidly in suggesting something of its curious potency and its ability to inspire such devotion. Matthews also manages to place him within the widest kind of tradition of English music, as well as laying emphasis on his reworking of traditional tonal usages. In the final pages Tippett is used as a rod with which to beat the composers who have followed Schoenberg rather than Stravinsky and Hindemith; serialism Matthews maintains,

> cannot easily evoke states of joy, gaiety, exuberance. If composers still want to express such emotions in their music, they might profitably consider how Tippett's language in its development from orthodox tonality to pantonality has always been a potent vehicle for the widest range of expression.

It is not a judgment of atonality with which, I suspect, Tippett himself would necessarily agree. Matthews's book remains, however, the best available introduction to its subject's genius.

Eric Walter White's book, by contrast, is little more than a recapitulation of well worn facts about the four operas and also, curiously, *A Child of our Time*, which has nothing 'operatic' about it at all. Its main interest lies in publication of a series of letters to the author dating from the genesis of *The Midsummer Marriage*, valuable insights into the workings of Tippett's rather wayward dramatic instinct. White is also at his most interesting on that first opera; it's difficult not to come to the conclusion that he would have been better advised to have written a detailed study of the composition of *Midsummer Marriage* with these letters at its core. Then the book might have provided a model for the close analysis of Tippett's music which must surely follow soon.

The War with Them

HELEN McNEIL on the road to Damascus

Recently I spent several days in Damascus giving a seminar on some American films and talking to Syrian journalists and other media people. I had been sent to Syria by the United States International Communications Agency, which must have made me one of the very few Americans to have been flown in to the Middle East during the past few weeks. While I was there, the American Embassy was battening down its hatches and sending home its women in anticipation of the kind of government-condoned attack which in fact happened the following week at the Embassy in Tripoli. I soon came to recognise that the pervasive but curiously unreal tension of Damascus was the day-to-day shape of political confrontation.

My job in Damascus was to offer some cultural and critical background to a season of Hollywood science fiction films shown at the American Cultural Center: *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *2001*, *Soylent Green*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (the 1956 Don Siegel version sent by lucky mistake), *Marooned*, *The Forbin Project* and, genre overcoming mere nationalism, *Fahrenheit 451*. The season had been a raving success, with people turned away from every screening. For political reasons American films can't be distributed in Syria, and none of these films had ever been shown publicly. The American films which are shown commercially, like *Papillon*, which was packing them in during my visit, are often unofficially 'borrowed' from Lebanese distributors, so they don't necessarily match either government ideology or popular taste. During the film season the Cultural Center enthusiastically handed out good quality plastic book bags printed in Arabic and English with an insipid s-f motto: 'Good-bye Yesterday, Hello Tomorrow'. Yet the pretty little bags didn't mention America, nor was the season advertised. There were reasons for this un-American reticence. The media are at the heart of Syria's war with the United States and 'them', as the Israelis tend to be called.

At a conservative estimate I must have seen a hundred men with submachine guns. In an interesting British export triumph, the security police drive about in unmarked Landrovers. I'm used to the sight of pistol-packing American traffic cops, but this kind of fire power had to be aimed at the local populace *en masse*. One evening, as an Embassy official and I were parking, a man in street clothes stepped out from behind a garage and waved a submachine gun at us. 'It's OK', cried my companion in diplomatic corps Arabic, 'we're diplomatic corps.' The subsequent gesture with the machine gun, 'translated by our feelings', as Wordsworth said of the Simplon Pass, caused us to abandon the parking place immediately. This man was, I take it, a bodyguard; over the past six months there have been several unsolved assassinations of members of government. If President Assad's secular, socialist government looks safe from an Iranian style right-radical revolution, and Syria's unveiled women have been given equal education opportunities, I suspect credit is due less to broad popular support than to the fact that Syria has the same American-Zionist enemy as Khomeini's reactionary theocracy.

The visual media have a socially important role to play in a country like Syria, which tries to focus the emotions of its increasingly uprooted people on external enemies. Syria does not observe international copyright law, and there are almost no libraries or bookshops; culture is, therefore, carried largely by visual media. As forms of communication which directly represent what they are about, film and television have an apparent realism which the symbolic representations of written language simply can't convey. This iconic immediacy means a corresponding difficulty in the communication of ideas. British TV avoids this difficulty by having lots of talk, but Syrian TV, with smaller resources, a narrow political line, and a huge popular hunger for a mixture of information and pleasure, has gone in two directions at once. Whether it is because foreign TV signals would be hard to jam, or because of a genuine wish to provide information and pleasure, Syrian TV shows many foreign series – yet (because the government forbids regular distribution?) these are as randomly diverse as the Hollywood films that chance to be shown. I saw *The Incredible Hulk*, an Egyptian stage comedy, and a distinctly unedifying French robbery-adventure film, and I was told that *The Little House on the Prairie* and *Kojak* were favourites.

At the same time Syria is trying to expand domestic film and video production. Through the kind hospitality of Amin Bunni, a Syrian television director, I saw some recent Syrian video work (that is, I saw it after I had got past three sets of armed guards at the TV station). It is strong work. When I spoke to Mohammad al Wadi, the Director of Programmes for Syrian TV, he stressed television's potential for education, and he was right, though perhaps not entirely in the field of specifically educational TV. By their form, video and film have the same mingling of realism and desire which is so striking a characteristic of Syrian (and most Arab) rhetoric. They are natural media for the intensification of strong feelings, and the Syrian videos showed signs of developing towards a potentially compelling kind of dramatised history. Amin Bunni's *Kuneitra, My Love*, an elegiac documentary about the city in the Golan which the Israeli army levelled, had tremendous nationalistic power despite some not entirely convincing interviews. In Haytam Hakri's *The Swing*, a handsome young soldier just can't bring himself to tell his best friend's wife and daughter that daddy won't be coming back from the wars. This stiflingly sentimental subject was given the full tear-jerker treatment, except that the camera kept wandering about the marvellously beautiful oasis where the family lived, sending images of a sensuous, undefeatable life. Omar Amerilay's *The Chickens*, a surrealistic satire on farm producers who cluck about their problems while an authoritarian government closes in on them, showed the most highly developed cinematic

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imagination of the three films, but it had never been shown. The lesson was clear. Passion and impact are fine, so long as they are about Palestine. For Syria, Palestine is a problem with a future. I doubt if such a useful object for anger will be set aside even if some international compromise is reached.

With the huge sweep of Syrian history available for identification, and visible all round in magnificent cities, castles, mosques, souks, and ruins, Syrian nationalism doesn't have to be 'about' Palestine. Nabil Malek, the most eminent Syrian film-maker, has moved away from impassioned documentary (as in his *Napalm*) to the feature fiction film, dramatising history. During my visit he was in the north of Syria filming a cavalry charge. When the Syrians watched the American science fictions they were most impressed by *2001*. But the most popular film was *Soylent Green* (1969) conventionally directed by old Hollywood hand Richard Fleischer. *Soylent Green* has an excellent restrained performance by Charlton Heston, but the Syrians' real interest lay in the story, which projects a future of futile heroism in a setting of dust, heat, overpopulation, corruption, food shortages, social inequality, sexual exploitation and, as a last twist, state-capitalist reprocessing of human flesh (neither the Syrians nor I quite believed that). *Soylent Green* is a fiction dramatising something fairly close to the third world present. It is a vivid, gushy, emotive film, and its message is bleak.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Too Much Electra

Ooh La La! devised by MIKE BRADWELL *Bush*
The Love of a Good Man by HOWARD BARKER *Royal Court*

The usual vices of 'improvised theatre' – hereinafter assumed to mean dialogue that has been coughed up in rehearsal by actors, then shaped and scripted by someone whose Christian name is invariably Mike – are lack of plot and momentum, its customary virtues plausibility of character and truth of detail. The parts, in short, tend to be better than the whole. That was certainly the case with Mike Leigh's recent *Ecstasy*, which was actually about aimlessness and 'ennui', and at times even with his justly admired *Abigail's Party*, in which there was an awful lot of sitting around and worrying about disasters offstage. Some plays become stuck in the shallows; only improvised drama gets bogged down in the depths. What's refreshing about Mike Bradwell's *Ooh La La!*, then, is the succinctness, fluency and sheer number of its scenes. Before analysis can become exhaustion, the camera has zoomed off elsewhere: cut to a university seminar, to a bedroom, to a school assembly, to another bedroom, to a dance floor, to an embryonic novelist visiting her professorial father. Cut, cut, cut.

Nor is the effect scattered. Mr Bradwell has provided us with a unifying character, a sexually predatory lecturer played by Stephen Warbeck, who looks a decade too young for the part, but compensates with an unruffled seducer's charm, a silky imperturbability, beyond his years. It is he who is responsible for the disintegration of the marriage of skittish Sarah (Rosalind March) to the conventional and somewhat coarse Alan (Mark Brignal), and he who effortlessly inveigles into bed the impressionable, guileless student, Kath (Frances Brookes). The only side of the story to which his presence is not essential is that involving the widowed professor (John Blanchard) and his uneasily married daughter (Bridget Ashburn). True, he visits them for supper, and gets sniped at for his exasperating cool by his hostess, but his impact on their wary mutual circlings is minimal. It's perhaps no coincidence that this particular relationship turns out to be the least dramatically arresting in the play: psychologically ravelled, packed with nuance and obliquity, but too self-contained, and too concerned with coming to terms with unseen characters, a dead wife and mother, an unsatisfactory husband; too much Electra and too little electricity.

Much of the rest, however, is as absorbing as it's alive. Alan grumbles that the dishes aren't washed and that he only 'gets it', meaning sex, once a week, while his unfaithful wife, unable to stifle wicked giggles, ripostes with some paradoxically sober truths: she finds him unattractive, ugly, 'horrible'. Kath, asked by the tutor who has betrayed her for a dissertation on the New Left, launches into a mottled, incoherent, and agonisingly personal speech about the dangers of despair. A young Glaswegian student (Hamish Reid), whose unpractised advances have been rejected by Kath, uses the same seminar to deliver a raging attack on Sassenach exploitation. The loss of everything, from North Sea oil to Scottish soccer stars, is (he implies) the fault of Alan himself, whose characteristically bloodless response is: 'It seems to me you raise several interesting points in your paper.' The play convincingly reminds us that lines don't have to jump, gambol or scintillate if they're to amuse an audience: they can lie down flat and half-expire, provided they also authentically reflect human idiosyncrasy, wryly observed. I, who scarcely crack a smile from one theatrical week to the next, laughed consistently, and often in the most satisfying way, at situations simultaneously funny and painful.

The Hull Truck Company's acting is sensitive and witty; but its collective efforts don't altogether answer one, I suppose, unimportant question. Why call the show *Ooh La La!*, as if it was a coy frolic in frilly knickers? Is it meant to draw attention to France, where the prof and his daughter propose to holiday, which Alan embarrassedly admits to having failed to visit during the 1968 *évènements* whose significance he piously teaches, and whose language Sarah pretends to be learning when she's two-timing her husband? Or is it an ironic reference to the sensual delights the characters mainly fail to find? Perhaps it's a combination of both, a forewarning that what we're about to see is actually a melancholy and somewhat wistful piece, which sees life as a puzzling and sometimes bruising struggle, made little easier by the intellectual and verbal tools that ought to be available on an English campus. The interpolated songs are, I fear, mainly a waste of breath; but they, too, reinforce this impression.

Good Man, in town for a week only, takes us to Passchendaele in 1920 – 'not ground so much as flesh' – in hopes of exposing British dereliction then and perhaps now. Among the representatives of our national heritage are an infantile Prince of Wales, a group of exhausted privates who face unemployment at home or more violence in Ireland when they've finished rooting out the rotting corpses, and a haughty grande-dame whose wish to re-inter her dead son is dismissed by the play as absurd self-indulgence. This lady's daughter puts the socialist point of view, suggesting there should be equality in death, and is then herself attacked for supposed sexual emptiness by a Lawrentian squaddie, who is 'going to a place where there's desire in the hips of women'. 'Nothing will ever move your womb, you should be sodomised,' he decides. 'Marry me' is her quaint riposte.

From the author of *Claw* and *Stripwell* this seems a pretty disappointing effort, alternately facetious and solemn, and populated by characters too unreal to communicate anything except their author's preconceptions. Some of these, for instance the digs at petty profiteers, are no doubt justified; some, such as the suggestion that the grief of a social enemy is an 'orgasm', seem a bit rough; but, either way, they don't mean enough to matter.

Television

Julian Barnes

Hooked

You can tell a committed drinker by the way he has the next glass safely in his sights well before he's finished the one he's on; and you can identify a committed TV serial addict by his similar cycle of thirst, anxiety, fear and relief. (The chronic cases even watch the week's repeats, like drunkards making midnight sorties to their dustbins for bottle-ends.) The addict's apprehension as *Testament of Youth* drew to a close was relieved when *The Old Curiosity Shop* (BBC-1) opened for business: despite static characters and a threadbare plotline relying largely on knots of colour (Dickens's fault, not the adaptor's) it has served well; winningly Victorian to look at (half-familiar genre paintings are constantly evoked) and featuring a touching pair of juves in Natalie Ogle (Nell) and Chris Fairbank (Kit).

As *Shop* in its turn pulls down its shutters, the serial-addict can relax: *Pride and Prejudice* has just started, *Blind Ambition* continues, and a clutch of non-fiction series – *Spy!, Spirit of Asia, Hollywood* – have also begun. *Pride* (BBC-2) even features the same Natalie Ogle (as Lydia Bennet) to assist the viewer to a comfortable elision. It's hard to imagine a sinkable adaptation of the novel being made; and Fay Weldon's seems to bring out more than most the easy, rippling wit of the original. Moray Watson's Mr Bennet – 'a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve and caprice' – is particularly well-judged; it's good too that he looks merely

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middle-aged, instead of being the plump, twinkly-eyed Dickensian dotard of other productions.

VCR-less viewers who give *Pride* its place will miss BBC-1's run of drama-docs under the heading *Spy!* It opened with Ruth Carter's *John Vassall,* a thoroughly plausible account of the Admiralty clerk's wan downfall, with John Normington as the almost likeable and curiously dignified hero-victim. It was more doc than drama, wisely declining to invent tension or gaudy up Vassall's weakness for indulgent and (at the time and place) illegal living into anything near a tragic fault. Recent events provided their own wry gloss on the Britishness of his fate: the homosexual clerk got 18 years round about the time when the homosexual knight-professor was drawing his backstairs pardon for what seemed on the evidence to be about the same level of treachery.

Hollywood (Thames), even judging by just the first episode, looks certain to prove one of the year's major series. By its end, Kevin Brownlow and David Gill should have swept away the average moviegoer's lazy preconceptions about the infant industry: merely to see a hand-tinted print of an early film projected at the right speed evaporates one's inherited condescension toward the tinkly-piano and jerky-movement images we mostly have. At the same time, I've yet to be convinced that the early movies were *that* sophisticated: the inventive energy seems to have gone into pioneering techniques rather than any great subtleties of acting or plot. One untrammelled pleasure, though, is going to be the personal testimonies of Brownlow and Gill's astonishing collection of sprightly octo- and nonagenarians. One splendid old lady spoke of earning a few dimes in her giddy youth when the industry's moral reputation was decidedly unsavoury: 'They called them the flickers and of course you *never* told them [your family and friends] that you appeared in the flickers in the *summer*.' She sounded like some grand, retired porno-queen tranquilly recollecting illicit lunchtime activities of long ago.

Kerry Packer's Channel Nine cricket coverage this winter has certainly made us appreciate our own tube sport; but the American handling of the Rose Bowl (*Grandstand,* BBC-1) was instructively good. Admittedly, American football, with its rehearsed plays and time-outs, is the ideal sport for television (commercial TV particularly: coaches have been known to call time-outs in response to the need for an advertising break). Even so, as the Trojans squeezed out the Buckeyes, and Charles White set a new rushing record – 'My blockers got me going, and I was off to the races' – you couldn't help admiring how efficiently the off-the-ball part of the game was covered.

The game itself defied (as it usually does) the cisatlantic thesis of 'violence on the pitch breeds violence on the terraces': everything on-field was bruising and gladiatorial, but the spectators remained perfectly behaved. It made a nice change from the scenes at Old Trafford in the Cup replay, when the Spurs goalkeeper was maimed during a 'challenge' by Joe Jordan. The Stretford Enders cheered as the stretcher was brought out, and sent up a gleeful anticipatory chant of 'Four-nil, four-nil' at Spurs. The result (nil-one) almost made one believe in divine justice – except that divine justice has such a miserable, snivelling record in Cup and League.

Art

John Spurling

Inner Marches

The British Art Show *Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield, until 27 January, then Newcastle and Bristol*
Stephen Amor *House, 62 Regents Park Road, London NW1*
Derek Boshier *Angela Flowers, Tottenham Mews, London W1*

The new Director of the Tate having declared in a radio interview, if I could believe my ears, that he would be concentrating on building up the Victorian collection, the support and display of contemporary art is obviously going to devolve more than ever on the Arts Council. Their own collection is already formidable and I suspect that in an eyeball to eyeball confrontation it would send much of the Tate's down to the cellar. Perhaps by the Nineties, when economic realities have had their way with us, both collections will be amalgamated as a brand-new Museum of Modern Art – housed, say, in what is now the National Theatre – leaving the Tate to nurture its historic British collection in scholarly peace.

The British Art Show – now in Sheffield, but moving in February to Newcastle and thence, in April, to Bristol – is exactly what the Arts Council should be spending its money on and, if the public response in Sheffield is anything to go by, it is something the patrons want (even if they don't necessarily like it) as much as the artists. Since it has taken two years to assemble, one can only hope that its successor is already being got ready to take the road. That said, I should add that if there were any regular way of seeing the best that was being done – at the Tate, for instance, or the RA – much of this lot would look distinctly tatty. But given that it's really the William Packer Show (Packer, the art critic of the *Financial Times*, having chosen it) and that he has left out several artists he ought to have put in and vice versa, it does, after its fashion, offer a fair, middle-of-the-road view of British Art over the past two years.

Packer's taste and the limitations of a travelling show have excluded what he calls 'the more experimental outer marches' of performance art and installations as well as socio-political art; nor has he included the work of students or of any senior artist born before the First World War. We are offered, then, in the main, a sample of recent work by the middle generation of straight painters and sculptors (in the proportion of roughly two thirds to one third), with a token nod in the direction of conceptualists and land artists.

What emerges is that abstraction is still going very strong indeed. Not only do all the most gifted and ambitious artists in the show – Riley, Hoyland, Huxley, Clough, Caro, King – continue to practise it, but they do so with steadily increasing power and sophistication. Riley is making her twists of colour dance and shimmer in a way that would have been unimaginable even three years ago; King's rugged assemblages of bolted black steel and slate are no less imaginative than those weightless, decoratively coloured fantasies he was making in the Sixties, but their sense of grandeur has grown with their inward complexity; Hoyland is exploring the activities of colour with unflagging energy; Huxley, on the other hand, has abandoned his fastidious colour fields and floating rectangles in favour of a range of greys and semi-Cubist motifs; Clough has refined her figurative abstraction to such a point that every painting is as clear as a window yet as packed with variety and surprise as a good plot; Caro is unfortunately not represented in this show by his latest or his best work, but he too has recently moved on from his long affair with sheets of rusted steel (which has spawned so many tedious imitators). Half a dozen artists of this calibre working at this pitch would be enough to give any show in the world a certain excitement, and if most of the 50-odd other abstractionists chosen by Packer tend to be merely pretty, tentative or repetitive, one can still pick out at least another half dozen worth looking at more than twice: Nigel Hall, Robert Mason, Brian Fielding, Alan Green, William Pye, Kenneth Draper, Michael Mason, to name but seven.

The figurative artists come out less well and apart from two pieces by the eccentrically gothic Ivor Abrahams and a shiny bronze by Leonard McComb, better known for his faint, spider's web drawings, there is a significant absence of figurative sculpture. Some kind of eccentricity seems still to be the only workable recipe for figuration: to use oddly-shaped canvases and paint with deliberate coarseness like Jeffrey Camp (poorly represented here) or Anthony Green; to put your paint on with a trowel like Kossoff; to play variations on style like Hockney; or to go to work in a bathroom like Victor Newsome. The one figurative painting, Michael Andrews's *The Garden at Drummond from Higher Ground*, which is strong enough to compete with the abstracts, does so precisely because its eccentricities – sinister, Burra-like figures in the foreground; paint laid so thinly into the canvas that it looks almost like tapestry; an exaggeratedly formal design – undermine the nature of what is depicted on every level. Just as much as King, Riley and the other leading abstractionists, Andrews offers you a mental, emotional and visual conundrum which cannot be solved and dismissed by simple recognition but which continues to baffle and stimulate for as long as you care to look.

The William Packer Show is too large and too lenient to the second-rate. It contains no fresh discoveries, has a lazy catalogue and is sometimes insensitively hung. But it includes enough to suggest that the Seventies, contrary to standard opinion, was a remarkable decade for British art.

Neither Stephen Amor nor Derek Boshier is in the Packer team and on present form could hardly claim to have been overlooked. Amor is repeating on a smaller scale and with less vigour what he was showing two years ago. It is not that one asks an abstract artist, as if he were designing wallpaper, to change his motif every so often, but that the motif should be the last thing one is conscious of. Abstraction is painting turned inside out, the heart of the matter. In his last show Amor seemed to be trying to find his way in through a kind of Venetian blind effect; for the moment he has stopped to examine the blinds.

Boshier is an odd figure. He promised much

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both as painter and sculptor in the Sixties, but then turned aside into various peripheral activities, most of them connected more with the social or political uses of art than with the thing itself. In an interview in the *Observer*'s colour supplement (he is not, you see, by any means a forgotten or neglected figure) he laments the present state of painting in Britain as if he and others like him who succumbed to the temptation of short cuts were not largely responsible for the bad publicity it has had. He is very welcome back as a painter, though more on the score of old promise than current performance, since his visual imagination is still in poor working order after its long neglect. Also he is still half in love with short cuts: 'the ever-present problem for an artist is who are you going to reach'. Surely that's the ever-present problem for PR men?

Films

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

Loners and Sin

Wise Blood (AA) *Camden Plaza*

Although he has been working as a director and writer pretty consistently for over 30 years, John Huston is probably still best known for his early films made with Humphrey Bogart. If his other films retain a reputation it tends to be not for the sake of their director but for some other of the multifarious reasons which cause films to be remembered – the circumstances of productions, as with *The Misfits*, or the oddity of their subject-matter, as with *Freud, The Secret Passion*. If his films have not been taken up by 'auteur' critics it is not because they lack a clear authorial personality but rather that that personality is perhaps too obvious. The films declare themselves too easily. They are 'about' loners, misfits and characters at odds with society. Unlike Howard Hawkes or Raoul Walsh, Huston's films do not produce a fictional world in which the 'Hustonian' hero emerges as part of the logic of representation. On the commercial side meanwhile, they have suffered from being idiosyncratic. They do not fit the industry's requirements for packaging according to genre or sub-genre, while lacking the consistency which would enable Huston's name alone, as happens with Hitchcock, to serve as their trademark.

With *Wise Blood* the alienation between Huston and contemporary Hollywood has become complete. The film was co-produced from West Germany and none of the (American-run) majors has taken it for release in Britain. But it is, in spite of this, a classically American movie, and indeed very Hollywood, but the traditions it draws on are those of regional literature and the old-fashioned B-picture, neither of which is in the mainstream of a contemporary fashion geared towards the sentimental and synthetic. Largely shot on location in Georgia (and in this respect different from the classic B-movies which were studio-shot), *Wise Blood* tells the story of Hazel Motes, a farm boy who, after his release from the army, sets off to the wicked city in a vain attempt to rid himself of his religious and puritanical upbringing. The 'wise blood' of the title belongs not to Hazel but to another character, Enoch Emery, a teenage boy who is just as dumb as Haze and equally hung up on religion – except that in his case religion takes the form of animistic sentiment rather than a dry and masochistic protestantism.

In Flannery O'Connor's novel, from which the film is adapted, Haze and Enoch were balanced against each other, and out of the gap between their respective obsessions emerged a sense of what the author – a Catholic – regarded religion as being really about. In the film this religious sense is lacking. Enoch is a poor simpleton and little more than an occasional foil for Haze. All the attention is on the desperate illogic of Haze's project and his inability to become a normal atheist. Haze cannot frequent a prostitute except in order to sin and can barely speak except to preach – his preaching taking the form of proclaiming to all and sundry the Church of Truth without Christ, 'where the blind don't see and the lame don't walk and what's dead stays that way'. The Church is not a success. Nor is Haze's sexual relationship with the daughter of a 'blind' preacher whom he meets on his first day in the city. Nor for that matter is the clapped-out old Ford which he buys to serve as a coffin-like home for himself. Having discovered the fraudulence of the preacher and had his precious Ford rolled down a slope into a lake by a policeman, Haze finally takes all the sins of the world on his own shoulders. He fills his boots full of stones, he blinds himself with quicklime, he binds his chest with wire. His half-dead body is found by the police on a wasteground and he dies – in police custody, as the saying goes – on the way back to his lodgings.

The film's telling of this seemingly purposeless tragedy is remarkable for its unassuming naturalism. Everything in the film just is. Words are spoken, actions are performed, thoughts are occasionally made available to be intuited. Of course stylelessness is itself a style and absolute naturalism is a fiction (and ideological at that). But the particular unadorned naturalist style of *Wise Blood* comes across mainly as an effort of intelligence exerted on the material so as to enable it to speak – which it does, eloquently. But whereas violence, perversity and general craziness are understated and rarely pointed up rhetorically, the humour tends to be signalled rather obtrusively. In the end directness wins out – and with it the sort of quality which can still give the American cinema the edge over any other.

Note on Art Cinema

In a week with so few releases, it is worth drawing NS readers' attention to things going on outside the world of West End cinemas and the national circuits. Although the circuits get narrower every year and the number of new releases is steadily diminishing, it is this form of cinema which still tends to get a monopoly of coverage in the press. Meanwhile, without fanfares, another type of cinema (if that is the word) is forming here and there, and deserves attention. For example, the Half Moon Theatre in the East End of London is now showing a season of films and events. The season, organised by Four Corners Workshop, alternates films of different types with discussions of the themes and questions raised by the films. Some new British independent work is being shown – partly around the theme of acting, partly around the representation of women. Film-makers are present wherever possible. Mike Leigh will be talking about his use of improvisation to accompany the showing of his film *Bleak Moments* on Saturday 19 January. On Saturday 2 February Sally Potter will be screening and discussing *Thriller*, a witty mystery film in which Mimi of Puccini's *La Bohème* investigates her own death. On Thursday 24 January, by contrast, the film being shown is King Vidor's *Stella Dallas* (1937) with Barbara Stanwyck. Though you could catch up with the film elsewhere, the context in which Four Corners and the Half Moon are placing it gives it a new angle which is not available in a repertory cinema or via the television.

Developments like these are not confined to London. In fact the much-abused provinces (where the decline of the 'straight' cinema is more marked than in London) are ahead of the metropolis in this respect. The Arnolfini Gallery and Arts Centre in Bristol already run mixed programmes of this type, combined with repertory work.

So does the Arts Lab in Birmingham. So does the Midland Group in Nottingham whose new cinema opens early next month. The Midland Group's own films meanwhile are currently being shown at the Side Gallery in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to be followed by some new films made in the North East itself – Digby Rumsey's *Out of Reach* and Stewart McKinnon's *Because I am King* (a film which incorporates a complete performance of Brecht and Hindemith's *Lehrstück* about Lindbergh). Events like these are not going to make the traditional cinema redundant. But they add something to what cinema is, and redirect attention to what cinema has been.

John Coleman is on holiday

Weekend Competition

No 2560 **Set by G. C. Nicholls**

You are invited to supply sentences bringing out clearly the meanings of verbs based on the names of contemporary political figures (e.g. 'Everyone else understood, but I was completely whitelawed'). Maximum of six goes each, by 1 February.

No 2597 **Set by Farouche Features**

We asked for New Year's resolutions for pet irritants.

Report **By the Lemon Kid**

Russell Lucas resolved, on behalf of 'The Collective Unconscious Responsible for Weekend Competition Reports': 'we will not make puerile jokes about the Competition Complex and waste precious space with our childish drivel, as few adult readers give a monkey's [expletive deleted] about our jolly japes and feeble fantasies.' Since an unconscious can no more reply than it can make a resolution, you'll have to accept a few words from me, Mr Lucas. An unendearing way to start the year – especially if you were thinking of entering any further competitions. However, I shall amaze you by exercising, albeit with gritted teeth, my own resolution to be more sparing with the lemons; I hereby award

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Mr Lucas three quid for temerity. And three for each of the entries printed below.

The editors of all tabloid newspapers
I will instruct my staff to stop referring to the Prime Minister as Maggie; to stop screeching about Ice-Box Britain whenever the temperature falls below 40° fahrenheit; to stop saying fun-loving when they mean lecherous, hell-raiser when they mean drunken hooligan, and mercy dash when they mean rescue attempt; to stop implying that every female involved in every news item is pretty; to eschew the use of 'cheers!' at the head of any article remotely concerning drink; to ban the words bid, probe, agony, perks, pickings, grab and stalwart.

JIM ANTHONY

Douglas Stuart
I will never again say '*Have* a nice weekend' or 'Have a *nice* weekend' or 'Have a nice *week*end' or 'Have a nice week*end*'.

PETER ALEXANDER

Joan Collins
I shall give it up. Well, at any rate, I shall give up talking about it.

JONATHAN BATES

Malcolm Muggeridge
My dear God, I did say that I wouldn't bother you again today, but I have, as it were, no-one else to turn to. Observing the seasonal pagan rites which overtake a Nation Hell bent on enjoyment of excess, I have decided to join in, to the extent anyway of making a New Year resolution; which like much else in this fleshly prison is valueless without a witness. I wonder if You could oblige? I resolve to be charitable, wise, and forebearing; and where the matter of sex arises always to turn the other cheek.

ROY KELLY

James Anderton
Every evening I will take a quiet stroll around Piccadilly, Manchester, in a blonde wig and hot pants in order to refute lying allegations that my boys harass people who are out of the ordinary. I will blacken my face and stand about in leather, whistling, outside Marks in order to prove that fuss about sus comes from the anarchist international.

GEORGE MOOR

Any BBC dubbing mixer
I will chuck my applause tapes in the dustbin. I will no longer greet with fusillades of synthetic laughter jokes remarkable only for lack of novelty and taste; nor with rounds of sycophantic applause the half-witted antics of clowns unfit even for the lower depths of Shakespearean comedy. I will accidentally use instead impromptu remarks expressing my real opinion. As thus: *I heard that at St Dominic's, Wake me when it's over* and *Oh God, not again!*

PETER PETERSON

James Callaghan
I will never again use the following expressions: 'This great movement of ours'; 'We have always been a very broad church'; 'Of course, Tony has no grasp of political realities'; 'I had always thought X's brand of socialism to be akin to my own' (in response to a particularly virulent article by X in the *Morning Star*); 'We must not belittle the achievements of those grim years. . .'

D. J. TAYLOR

Tony Miles

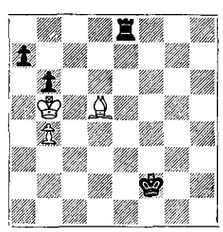
Chess

No 163 **August Problems**

The August problems were an interesting selection. **Problem 143 (2r2bk1 / 3R1ppp / 4p3/ 2q5 / 1p1BQP2 / 8 / 1PP3PP / 1K6)** was not too difficult. After 1. . .Q-QN4! White has a trilemma. (a) 2.Q-N7 loses to . . .Q-B8ch; 3.K-R2 and now either 3. . .RxP threatening . . .Q-B5ch. 3. . .Q-B5ch; 4.P-N3 (4.K-R1, QxP; 5.RxP, Q-Q8ch; 6.K-R2, P-N6ch), QxBPch; 5.B-N2, R-B6; 6.RxP, QxPch; 7.K-R1, Q-Q8ch; 8.K-R2, P-N6ch; or 3. . .P-N6ch does the trick. (b) 2.R-N7, Q-B8ch; 3.K-R2, R-R1ch; 4.K-N3, Q-R3; 5.P-B3 – forced – P-B4 (!) (a useful zwischenzug, shifting the WQ from its central post and avoiding the mild complications of . . .Q-R5ch; 6.K-B4, PxPch; 7.KxP). 6.Q-B3 (else the R goes), Q-R5ch; 7.K-B4, PxPch; 8.KxP, R-B1ch; 9.K-Q3, R-Q1; 10.Q-K3, Q-R3ch winning. So (c) 2.R-R7 (to block the R file), Q-B8ch; 3.K-R2, P-N6ch! 4.PxP (4.KxP, Q-B5mate), R-B8; 5.P-QN4, Q-B5ch; 6.P-N3, R-B7ch mating in a few moves. **Problem 144 (1Q6 / 5qpk / 4r2p / p7 / 5n2 / 1P2Bp1P / P4P1P / 5R1K)** was the simplest. The intended 'solution' was 1. . .RxB, 2.PxR, Q-N3; 3.R-KN1 (R-B2, NxP) P-B7! 4.RxQ, P-B8=Qch; 5.R-N1, Q-B6ch; 6.R-N2, QxRmate. However, as Mr J. D. Taylor pointed out, 1. . .N-K7, with the unstoppable threat of . . .Q-N3, is even easier. **Problem 145 (8 / 4k3 / 2Rn3p / 8 / 3P2P1 / r4PK1 / 8 / 8)** was struck by gremlins. The omission of the WP on Q4 in the original diagram confused matters immensely. Since the position is still interesting (without the pawn) and many solvers analysed it quite deeply, I shall consider it. Firstly 1.P-N5 loses trivially to . . .PxP; 2.K-N4, N-B2; 3.P-B4, R-R5. My second suggestion 1.K-B4 does little and 1. . .N-B2 should win comfortably. The third possibility 1.K-R4 is the most interesting. Obviously not 1. . .RxP; 2.P-N5, so 1. . .N-B2; 2.P-B4, R-R5 (if R-KB6; 3.R-B4! holds); 3.K-N3 (P-B5? permanently cedes the KN5 square), R-R8. Now Black has preserved his pawn since P-N5 is met by . . . P-R4, and if White 'passes' then Black can improve his position by K-B1-N2. However, it is still not clear that he can win. Reverting to the actual position, with the P on Q4, one's first impression, gazing at the lonely black RP, is that White must be able to draw with ease. White can play 1.K-R4 continuing as above with a likely draw. He can also draw with 1.K-B4, N-B2; 2.K-B5! RxPch; 3.K-N6 (the QP prevents N-K4ch) when the aggressive post of the WK holds the balance, eg 3. . .R-B5; 4.R-B7ch, K-K3; 5.R-B6ch, K-Q2; 6.R-R6, etc. The line that is affected most by the P(Q4) is 1.P-N5 which White chose in the game (Steedman-Miles, British Ch. 79). Now 1. . .PxP; 2.K-N4, N-B2; 3.P-B4 draws immediately as the QP prevents R-R5, but the game illustrates just how many lives a doomed pawn can have in practice: 1. . .K-Q2! 2.P-Q5 (if 2.R-N6, K-B2 followed by . . .N-K5chxP), PxP; 3.K-N4, N-B2; 4.R-B6 (now if 4.P-B4, R-R5, but 4.R-K6 intending R-K4 and then P-B4 is a better try), K-K2; 5.R-K6ch; K-B1; 6.R-K4; R-R8, 7.K-R3 (P-B4, R-N8ch), K-N2! 8.P-B4 (or R-KN4, K-N3; 9.P-B4, K-B4! 10.PxP, NxPch wins), K-N3! Now the P is protected by a web of N forks – note that the R-K6ch doesn't help. 9.R-Q4, R-R6ch! 10.K-N2 (if K-N4, N-R3 is mate), P-N5 and the pawn decided the issue. Problem 146 was extremely complicated and I will deal with it at length next week. Prizewinners: Mr J. D. Taylor £20; Messrs Cornforth, Chand, Deshmukh, Garfath and Sobey £6 each.

Problem 163

White to play. Does he have any drawing chances? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 30 January.

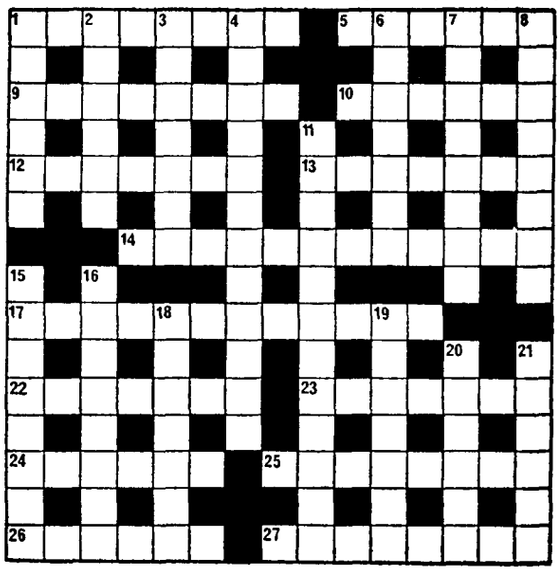


Solution to problem 161

Yes: 1.B-K5ch! KxB (2.K-N4, P-R4ch wins). 2. Q-K7ch, K-B4; 3.N-Q4ch, K-N5; 4.P-R3ch, K-R4; 5.P-N4ch, K-R3; 6.N-B5ch! PxN; 7.Q-B6mate.

Weekend Crossword 1330

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1330, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 29 January.



ACROSS

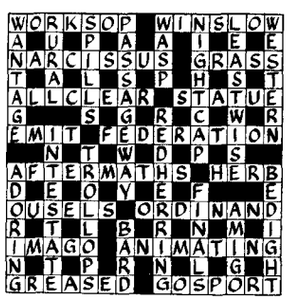
1 Study the righteous and make a fresh regulation (8).
5 In a hurry the point is brought up (6).
9 Washed up everything with a universal bottle (8).
10 Coaches lots of coaches (6).
12 Gone crazy after spoil in the battlefield (7).
13 A man with a drink inside is company (7).
14 Cheerful with liquor, just for a lark! (6, 6).
17 Articles of clothing for the first among lovers (12).
22 It takes a century to guarantee criticism (7).
23. Most of the crowd join with woman in prayer (7).
24 Involve having irregulars in the back rank (6).
25 Epitomises a poet (8).
26 Bands as among females (6).
27 A feature of the country is to be hesitant before a dispute (8).

DOWN

1 States in a genuine document (6).
2 Charm which makes everyone certain to lose his head? (6).
3 Poet for sale after the first half of the month (7).
4 Means of regular admission without payment in main group (6,6).
6 Vegetables in which sharp things strike up (7).
7 Complaints from those who knew him personally (8).
8 Analyses believers in Artemis (8).
11 Indestructible and still competent when past his prime perhaps? (12).
15 Amused reactions produced by ones who nearly miss (8).
16 Plants which have a section cut up (8).
18 The learned and true die in obscurity (7).
19 The sport of putting part of one's body in fruit (7).
20 Donkey engine? (6).
21 The place for a proverb about fighting (6).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1328



Prizewinners to No 1328

Steve Combes (Southsea)
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IVS

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CONSULTANT

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The person(s) we are looking for will be experienced in social research and investigation and will have a wide knowledge of social policy issues especially in community work. Experience of work in the broad field of adult education/community development/social action, will be an advantage.

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RE-ADVERTISEMENT: Previous applicants will automatically be reconsidered.

For further details contact: **BASSAC, 7 Exton Street, London SE1. 01-261 1919.** Closing date **1 Feb. 1980.**

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Editor

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Application forms can be obtained from **Clive Jenkins, General Secretary, ASTMS, 10-26a Jamestown Road, London NW1 7DT.**

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CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Wed. 23 Jan. First of 3 meetings on NHS. Dr Maurice Miller, MP: 'A Parliamentary Perspective' 7.30 p.m. at House of Commons. All welcome.

LAOS AND VIETNAM: Edward Milner (Open Univ.) on recent visit to Laos, Christine White (researcher at Sussex Univ.) on recent visit to Vietnam. Thurs. 24 Jan. 7.30 p.m. Univ. of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Adm. 25p. Britain-Vietnam Assoc., 8 The Downs, Bluebell Hill, Rochester, Medway 61575.

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